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SOME
THOUGHTS
CONCERNING
VIRTUE

AND
HAPPINESS.

IN
A Letter to a Clergyman.

----- *Rectius hoc est*
Hoc faciens vivam melius, sic dulcis Amicis
Occurram — HOR.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JER. BATLEY, at the Dove in
Pater-noster Row. 1729.



PREFACE.

WHO was the Author of the following Letter, is wholly unknown to the Publisher, neither is it material to the Merits of the Piece itself, but the Person to whom it was addressed being told by many of his Friends that this rough Draught or Picture of human Nature, how unfinished soever it may appear, yet the Lines

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are just, and the Features are true ; he has therefore thought fit to let it be exposed to publick View, that all Persons may have liberty to censure or approve as they shall judge most proper.

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S I R,

THE Friendship which you have honoured me with for so many Years, is what I have always set the highest Value upon, and therefore shall make it my constant Endeavour to preserve it; for I scarce know any thing in the World that can yield one a greater Pleasure than the *Esteem* of an *honest* and a *worthy Man*. But the Task you impose upon me in your last, to give you in Writing a short Scheme of those Thoughts in *Morality*, which I have sometimes offered to you in Conversation, is what I would willingly decline, if I could dispense with the least Command of yours, or if I did not think myself obliged most religiously to observe whatever you enjoin.

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'Tis not that I am under any Apprehension of offending you, by proposing what may perhaps be a little uncommon, and somewhat differing from the received Opinion; for I know you have too much *right Sense* to be imposed upon by false Reasoning, and therefore you are not afraid of any *Freedom* or *Debate*; but can hear with the utmost Candour and Fairness, any thing that can be advanced, provided it is not contrary to *Religion* or *good Manners*; and whenever I offer any thing of that Nature to you, I shall deserve to forfeit for ever your Friendship and good Opinion, which would be the most sensible Loss I could possibly sustain.

You know that of late I have had very great Occasion and Opportunity to make *moral Reflections*, and tho' my
Talent

Talent that way is but small, yet as you were pleased not altogether to disapprove something of that kind, which I mentioned when I saw you last, and since you desire to have in Writing a short View of the whole *Scheme*, in order to take it into a strict Examination ; I shall be the more ready to gratify you, because the Distance to which we are cast is so great, as very rarely to allow me the Happiness of your Company.

THE only thing that makes me a little shy in this Affair is, that I cannot comply with your Demand without seeming to encroach upon your *Province*, and assuming that same Privilege over you, which you do with good Authority exercise over the rest of Mankind ; for I cannot but imagine to my self, that whilst you oblige me
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to act the part of a *Preacher*, (for which I am no way qualified,) you are forced in the mean time to descend from above, and sit below like a meek and *humble Auditor*. This I must own is a very great Hardship, which I am really ashamed to put upon you, the *Sermon* being so very serious and dull, and somewhat too long into the bargain. But as you have brought this Misfortune upon yourself, there is no Remedy; you must keep your Countenance and hear me patiently, and so I begin my *Discourse*.

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S O M E

SOME
THOUGHTS
CONCERNING
Virtue and Happiness, &c.

PART I.

SECT. I.

BY reflecting on what passes within ourselves, we know that we do not only *Perceive* those Ideas which are in our Minds, so as to be able to compare them one with another, and to discern their various Relations, Agreements, and Disagreements, &c. but we are also variously *affected* by them, and they give us Joy and Satisfaction, Pleasure and Delight, and thereby promote

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our *Happiness*; or else occasion Grief and Disturbance, Uneasiness and Pain, and so far contribute to our *Misery*.

THE Power to be thus affected, or to perceive *Pleasure* and *Pain*, is what we call by the general name of *Sense*; which all Animals are possessed of in some Degree, and *Mankind*, in particular, are endowed with great variety of Senses, or passive *Powers of Perception*, through which the proper Objects differently affect us with Pleasure or Pain.

AND the several Modes of Grief and Joy, excited in us by these Objects, acting upon our Senses, are called *Affections* or *Passions*.

PLEASURE is called *Good*, and Pain *Evil*, but these Terms are commonly applied to *Objects*; for whatever is apt to raise or excite Pleasure in us, is in itself and *immediately Good*; as that which may procure us objects of Pleasure, is called *mediately Good*. On the contrary we name that *Evil* which gives us Pain and Disturbance, and that is *mediately and consequentially Evil*, which will procure us any Evil, or deprive us of any Good.

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THE Impressions received into our Minds, from the various Objects which have any Influence or Effect upon us, by striking upon some of our *Senses* or Powers of Affection, do give us either *Pleasure*, or *Pain*; for whatever it is, which produces neither of these, is not in itself either *Good* or *Ill*, but perfectly indifferent, and of no moment nor concern.

As the Sensations of *Pleasure* and *Pain* are annexed to the Impressions which Objects make upon our Senses, when *present*; so also when they are *absent*, their Images and Representations, as they pass before our View, are attended with an Idea or Appearance, a Fancy or Opinion of *Good* or *Evil*, as they are considered with respect to our selves, and the Effect they would have upon us, by producing in us either Pleasure or Pain.

WE do not only receive Pleasure from the immediate *presence* of Good, but it also gives Joy and Satisfaction, when we know that it is in our *Possession*, so as that we can enjoy it whenever we please; as on the contrary, the Loss, the Want, or *Absence* of Good,

gives us Grief and Uneasiness, whenever its *Idea* presents itself to the Mind. And as present Evil affects us with Pain, so the *Idea* of absent Evil which we have escaped, or are delivered from, gives us Pleasure. We also receive Joy and Satisfaction, from the Thought of approaching Good, or departing Evil, which is called *Hope*; as the Disturbance we receive from the view of departing Good, or approaching Evil, is called *Fear*.

WHEN a Man is free from all *Uneasiness*, and has no Perception of any Thing, but what is pleasing and agreeable, he is then perfectly content with his present State, and has no *Inclination* nor Endeavour but to continue it. But when these Objects of *Good* or *Evil* begin to act upon us, so as to affect us with *Uneasiness*; 'tis then that we are put into *Motion*, being necessarily determined by Nature, to shun and escape, so far as we are able, every painful and uneasy Sensation; as well as to retain and continue that which is pleasing and delightful.

ALL present or approaching Evil excites *Aversion*; which implies not only the Affection of Pain and Disturbance, but an Endeavour

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vour to fly from and avoid it ; as absent or departing Good occasions *Desire*, which implies not only Grief and Uneasiness in the want of it, but an Inclination to obtain and preserve it.

Desire, or *Aversion*, is the *vis impressa*, or the moving force in all voluntary Agents ; the one being an *Impulse*, whereby we are driven away from whatever appears to be Evil ; as the other is an *Attraction*, whereby we are drawn towards that which we take to be Good. Yet these may be reduced to one and the same by a different view of their Objects, for Desire may be called Aversion, if we consider the absence of Good as an Evil ; as Aversion may be termed Desire, if we consider the removal of Evil as a Good.

THIS force of *Attraction*, or *Repulsion*, proceeds from the Idea or Appearance of Good or Evil, which is present in the Mind ; for every *Idea* of absent Pleasure which we want, and are not possessed of, is a *real Pain* ; and the greater the Appearance, or Opinion of the Pleasure, the greater will be our Uneasiness in the want of it, and our *Desire* to obtain it : And as *Aversion* to present Evil is equal

equal to the Sensation of Pain that we feel, so *Fear*, or Aversion to future Evil, that is likely to befall us, will be proportionable to our Idea of the Misery which we imagine it will bring upon us.

EVERY Uneasiness that we feel, is a Motive to Action, but before we can be put into *Motion*, or induced to change our present State, 'tis necessary that the *Force* should be sufficient to overcome the *Resistance*; or that the Desire of some absent Good, or Fear of some approaching Evil, would prevail over the Pleasure we enjoy in our present Condition.

THOUGH the Satisfaction of our present Condition be not very great, and the *Desire* of some absent Good be very strong, yet if that Desire be ballanced by some *Aversion* to the Means of obtaining it, or Fear of some Evil that may follow, we shall not be put into Motion, but be determined to *forbear* the pursuit of that Good; nay, though our present Estate be exceedingly painful and uneasy, yet if our Aversion to the Means of freeing ourselves from it be greater than our Aversion to the present Evil, we shall be determined to *endure* it.

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IN all Cases where opposite *Desires* and *Aversions* do, at the same time, urge us to do, and to forbear any Action; if equal, they destroy one another, and we remain in the same state as before; otherwise the most Powerful will determine us to change or continue it.

AND where various *Desires* and *Aversions* do move us different ways, or excite us to different Actions, the strongest will always prevail, and the *Force* or *Eagerness* wherewith we pursue any Good, or fly from any Evil, will in some measure be proportionable to the *prevailing* Desire or Aversion wherewith we are moved.

YET that we may effectually be put into *Motion* towards any Good, 'tis necessary, not only that its Idea should be present in the Mind, so as to raise *Desire*; but also that it be judged to be *attainable*; for *Hope*, which is a most pleasing Affection, takes off very much from the Uneasiness of Desire, and at the same time quickens our Activity in the pursuit; whereas *Despair* of obtaining what we have in view, puts an end to all our Endeavours, though Grief and Sorrow in the want of it may still continue. WHILE

WHILE we are in pursuit of any Good, it is not necessary that the *Idea* should be always present to the Mind, because when we are once put into Motion, we shall continue in the same state, till some new Impression do produce a Change; but the more frequently the Idea of Pleasure is presented to our View, the more *Impatience* of Desire will be encreased, and our Motion *accelerated*, so as sometimes to be over-hasty, and by taking rash Measures occasion *Disappointment*.

ALSO when we fly from any Evil which we apprehend to be coming upon us, 'tis not necessary that the *frightful Idea* should be always present to the Fancy; but the more it is in the Mind, the more our *Fear* and *Consternation* will be encreased, which makes our Flight too hasty and precipitate, and disables us from taking the most proper Methods to avoid it.

S E C T. II.

Happiness is what we aim at in all our Actions, which consists in Ease and Relief from *Pain*, and in the Enjoyment of the greatest

greatest and most lasting *Pleasure*; and *Wisdom* denotes a Capacity of pursuing this great End by the best Means.

WE are by Nature so constituted as to receive many real Pleasures and Pains, both from our external and internal Senses; but besides these, the removal or lessening of a Pain operates as a Pleasure, and the loss or diminution of a Pleasure is to be accounted as a Pain; as in *Algebra*, the Subtraction of a negative Quantity, is the addition of a Positive, and the Subduction of a Positive, the addition of a Negative.

ALL *Pleasures* when they cease are succeeded by Uneasiness and Pain; as violent *Pains*, when removed, do for a Time, by bare Cessation, occasion the highest Pleasure.

WHEN we are in a state of Joy and Satisfaction, the arrival of a Good makes a less addition to our *Happiness*, towards which we are already so far advanced; but if Evil comes upon us, it causes a more bitter Sensation of *Misery*, as it not only gives us Pain, but deprives us of the foregoing Pleasure. But when we are in Grief, and *Distress*, whatever Evil may befall us, makes

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a less addition to our Misery, because it gives us little Pain, more than what we felt before; but the arrival of a Good produces a more lively Sensation of *Delight*, when it not only gives us Pleasure, but relieves us from the preceding *Anguish*.

WHEN *Hope* and *Expectation* of approaching Good run high, the Pleasure will be less when the desired Event comes to pass, because it is in some Measure anticipated and prevented: But if we fail of attaining it, the Pain of *Disappointment* will be greater. Whereas when approaching Evil is apprehended and expected, the Grief and Surprise will be less when it comes upon us, but our Pleasure will be greater if we escape it.

SUCH is the State of *Human Life*, that even Misery itself seems a necessary Ingredient to our Happiness, since many of our Pleasures are only Alleviations of Pain, and even those which are the most real and natural, are very much enhanced and recommended by some antecedent Uneasiness; insomuch that if all Pain could be taken away, the Pleasures remaining would but be few, and those too so very dull and insipid, that we should be reduced
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to a State of perfect *Indolence* and *Inactivity*. But the wise Author of our Beings, in order to put us into Motion, has subjected us to many unavoidable *Pains* and *Uneasinesses*; and such is the Frame of our Nature, that whenever we feel any uneasy Sensation, we are necessarily determined to get rid of and escape it as soon as possible.

THE Uneasiness of *Desire*, when it is long protracted, and cannot acquire what it earnestly seeks, must occasion continual *Misery*; as *Aversion* must in the same manner cause continual *Grief* and *Calamity*, when that which it earnestly shunn'd, and would have escaped, remains present, and is altogether unavoidable. Yet these Pains are very necessary and useful, if they are not too long continued; being the Springs of all our *Motions*, and the *Removal* of them, when we obtain what we desired, or are delivered from what we feared or endured, affording a *Pleasure* answerable to the proceeding *Pain*.

IF we felt no Pain from *Desire* or *Aversion*, we should not pursue or obtain any Good, neither would it afford any Relish or Enjoyment: The more violent our *Desires* or *Aver-*

sions are, the stronger and more eager will our *Motions* be, and the more *intense* the subsequent Delight, which results from the Removal of a more grievous and tormenting Pain.

BUT tho' to get free from Uneasiness be the first Step towards being *happy*, yet that seems to be no absolute Gain: 'Tis only retrieving what we had lost; and all Pleasure of that kind can only ballance the *Misery* that went before. But when besides Relief from a Pain we obtain the Enjoyment of a real Pleasure, that is a double *Acquisition*, and adds something to our Stock of solid Happiness.

AMONGST the various *Pleasures* Human Nature is capable of receiving, some are low and sordid, others more exalted and refin'd; some are faint and languid, others more lively and transporting; some transient and momentary, yielding no *after Satisfaction* in Reflection and Remembrance; while others are permanent and lasting, not only pleasing in their immediate Operation, but in the Consciousness and Memory they leave behind them, which always affords the sweetest and sincerest *Delight*.

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Tho' what is apt to produce Pleasure in us be called *Good*, and that which gives us Pain, in any degree, be term'd *Evil*; yet when we come to estimate Good and Evil, we shall find the Value lies much in *Comparison*: for a lesser Good which deprives us of a greater, is not really and absolutely a Good, but is rather to be counted an Evil; as a lesser Evil which prevents a greater is to be esteemed as a Good.

NEITHER is that to be accounted as a *Good*, which tho' it yields immediate Pleasure, yet is sure to be follow'd by more lasting Grief and Sorrow; as on the contrary, that ought by no Means to be esteemed as an *Evil*, which though it causes present Pain and Disturbance, will in its Consequence procure us greater Pleasure.

S E C T. III.

WHENEVER we pursue that which upon the whole is not really our *Good*, as also when we fly from that which is not necessarily and absolutely *Evil*; these must be manifest *Errors* in our *Conduct*, as they are not conducing
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to our *Happiness*, which is the ultimate end of our Lives, and the Center to which all our Motions ought to tend.

YET we must unavoidably be subject to such Errors, because we are put into Motion by *Desire* and *Aversion*, which though they are excited by the Objects of Good and Evil, are not always proportionable to their real and intrinsic Value, but do very much depend on their *Appearance*, or the Impression which they make upon their Mind ; and it may frequently happen, from many Causes, that the *apparent* Good or Evil may be different from the *real* ; and a lesser *Species* or Appearance of Good or Evil when frequently presented and kept in the Mind, shall act upon us more than a greater, that is kept at a Distance, and seldom taken into Consideration.

WHATEVER it is which when *present* has affected us with Pleasure or Pain, when it is *absent*, its *Idea* will be attended with an Idea or Imagination of Good or Evil, as often as it is presented to our View ; and the greater the Idea or Appearance of absent Good or approaching Evil, or the Sensation of present

sent Pain, and the more lively its *Impression* is upon the Mind, the greater will be the *Impulse* of Desire or Aversion.

BUT as these *Ideas* act upon us only when they are present, it follows that the more frequently any Idea is presented to the Mind, and the longer it continues there, the greater Effect it will have upon us; so that the Force of *Desire* or *Aversion* excited in us by any Idea or Sensation of Pleasure or Pain, will be in a Proportion compounded of its *Magnitude* and its *Duration*, or the Time of its Continuance in the Mind.

WHEN the *Ideas* of Pleasure or Pain, annexed to Objects, are greater or less than what those Objects will really produce, as also when they are associated and combined with such things as are not necessarily either *Good* or *Evil*; they are then inadequate, false and deceitful, tending to no other End but to lead us astray in our Pursuit after *Happiness*.

BUT we are liable many ways to be betrayed into wrong Notions, and false Opinions of *Good* or *Evil*. In our tender Years, before we are capable of forming a Judgment
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of our own, we are influenced by the Opinion and Example of others, and the Prejudices and Prepossessions contracted by *Education* and early Instruction are very difficult to be conquered at a *riper Age*; and from many Causes the *Ideas* of Good or Evil will be unaccountably associated and united with many Things to which they are not necessarily allied; and many others will retain a greater or less Appearance thereof than is agreeable to *Truth*.

THE different Position of Objects, with respect to *Distance*, will cause their Appearances to vary, and very much increase or diminish the concomitant *Ideas of Good or Evil*; for that which is brought near and placed full in our View, will have a stronger and more distinct Appearance, and the *Idea* of Pleasure and Pain, which accompanies it, will be more lively and affecting than that which is distant and remote, so as to make but a faint Impression upon our *Senses*.

AND with respect to *Time*, that which is to come, and viewed at a great *Distance*, loses its just Proportion, and appears less than it ought; and that which is long since past,

past, is in some Measure effaced and worn out; so that the *Ideas* of *Pleasure* or *Pain* which attended it are scarcely any more perceiv'd, while that which has been lately imprinted upon the Mind is presented by the Memory *fresh and entire*; from whence it happens that inferior Satisfactions, when often repeated, and frequently renew'd, may sometimes leave behind them a more lively Idea of *absent Pleasure*, than much greater Delights, that are but seldom enjoy'd.

THOSE *Objects of Pleasure* which are placed near; and frequently act upon our Senses, will upon a double account have a greater Effect, both as the *Ideas* which they excite are more lively and distinct, and especially as they are more in the Mind, and oftener brought into our Thoughts. For a *lesser Force*, which acts continually, will by degrees overcome the greatest opposite *Impulse* which is but seldom renew'd.

AND it may often happen from our different *Situation* and the Position of Objects, that a lesser *Species* of Good or Evil may be brought *near*, and frequently presented to our Senses, so as at some certain Seasons to

be almost constantly in the Mind; while other Objects of the same kind, of much greater Importance, may be cast at a *Distance*, and seldom thought of or taken into Consideration.

AND this gives a Solution of that Difficulty, why the *greatest Good or Evil*, even that which is apparently so, and in our cooler Hours, confessed and acknowledged as such, does not always *determine the Will*; nor the Desire of the one or the Apprehension of the other, when *absent*, is at all Times sufficient to overcome the Satisfaction of some inferior *present* Enjoyment: And a lesser Evil which is present, and constantly felt, shall, by its continual Action, prevail over all opposite Impressions from the greatest absent Good or future Evil, whose Ideas are but seldom brought into our View. And the *sensual Appetites*, which besides the Ideas of absent Pleasure, are also attended with a present uneasy *Sensation* of Body, will sometimes have a greater Influence than the greatest and most valuable absent Good, whose Idea is not always kept in the Mind.

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AND from both these Causes, the Ideas of Good and Evil being *greater* or *less* than they ought to be; and their being too *frequently* or too *rarely* presented to our View, it must of Necessity come to pass, that our *Affections* will be disproportionate and irregular; and we shall on many Occasions make that the Object of our *Desire*, which upon the whole is not really our *Good*; and that our *Aversion*, which is not truly and absolutely *Evil*; and as Objects do change their *Position*, and are accidentally brought near, or removed far from us, their Appearances will alter, and our Affections will vary, so that we shall not be steady and uniform in our *Conduct*; but frequently differ from ourselves, making alternately now this, now that, to be our principal Aim; and pursuing that at one Time, as a *Good*, which we find at another, by sad Experience, to be a *real Evil*.

S E C T. IV.

To prevent such Delusion, God Almighty has endow'd us with *Reason*, to be our Guide

and Director; which we are oblig'd to consult upon all Occasions; and not to be hasty and precipitate in obeying every pressing Desire or Aversion; but sometimes put a stop to our *Motions*, till by a little Consideration they may be ordered and directed for the best, so as to be most conducing to our *Happiness*, which is the ultimate end of our Lives.

IF amidst the great variety of Pleasures and Pains, which we are capable of receiving, we should yield to the first *Motions of Sense*, and be carried away by every Desire and Aversion, we should be frequently *misled* from our true Felicity, and as often create to ourselves Grief and *Repentance*; and therefore whenever we are struck with the Appearance of any Good, so as to raise in us a *Desire* to obtain it; the general Desire of Happiness implanted in our Nature, should oblige us to *suspend* our *Motions*, and stop the Prosecution of that particular Desire, till we have employ'd a few *transient Thoughts* in examining, whether that which we fancy to be our Good, be really and necessarily so; or whether we may not be without it, and yet

yet be easy and contented; and whether lastly the obtaining of that Good may not deprive us of a greater Good, or bring upon us a greater Evil, and therefore ought to be *forborn*.

AND in like manner, when the *Appearance of Evil* excites our *Aversion*, we ought not to obey the Impulse till we have considered, whether what we take to be Evil, and would fly from us as such, may not be sustain'd without any necessary Aversion and Abhorrence; and whether it may not be a means to procure us a greater Good, or prevent a greater Evil, and therefore ought to be *endured*.

It may also deserve a short Enquiry, whether it will be in our Power to *obtain* that which we make the Object of our *Desire*, and also whether after all our Endeavours, we shall be able to *escape* that which is the Cause of our *Aversion* and Disturbance. For there are many Things we may fancy to be our Good, which are placed beyond our reach, or which are in their Nature precarious and uncertain: And whilst our *Desire* is fixt upon what we shall never obtain, or what may easily be lost or taken from us,

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we are exposed to continual Vexation and Disappointment : But if we can by working upon our own Minds, withdraw the *Fancy* and *Opinion* of *Good* from such Objects, and thereby remove the *Desire*, all will be easy.

AND as it is the Condition of human Life to be exposed to many unavoidable Misfortunes and *Calamities*; whenever the *Apprehension* or Opinion of those Evils is greater than it ought to be, the Grief and Disturbance will be so much the greater, not only at the Approach of the supposed Evil, but at the very distant Thought of it; and yet the increase of the *Aversion* can be no diminution of the Evil itself, because with our utmost Efforts we shall not be able to escape it. But if we can by any Means diminish the Fancy and Opinion of the Evil, the *Aversion* will abate, and we may by degrees be reconciled to it, so as to bear it patiently, which will very much promote our inward Quiet and Satisfaction.

As we cannot avoid reflecting upon our own Conduct, *Experience* will convince us, that we are often imposed upon and deceived,

ed, by too hastily assenting to the first Appearance, and *striking Fancy* of Good or Ill; the more frequently and impartially any Person reviews his own Actions, the more lively Impression of this Truth will remain upon his Mind; so as to excite a constant Apprehension of judging amiss, and introduce an habitual Care and Caution in all his Proceedings, sufficient to restrain the Sallies of violent Passions, and make all his Motions *deliberate* and *sedate*.

Every *Idea* which presents itself, should be oblig'd to wait a while, and be carefully examin'd before it be allow'd to pass; that if it is not adequate and true, it may be rectified and adjusted.

If by reason of unequal *Distance*, Objects have lost their just Proportion, and appear greater or less than they ought; this may in some Measure be remedy'd: For by due *Consideration* that which is distant and remote, may be brought home to the Mind, and placed near and view'd in the same Light, as that which is present.

If from any other Cause *Appearances* are false and deceitful, or united with Objects to which

which they do not properly appertain; we may by a fair Enquiry discover the Fallacy and Imposture which they contain; and when they come to be oppos'd by *Reason*, and better Thought, all those deluding Opinions and imposing Fancies will vanish and disappear; the *Desires* or *Aversions* which they had rais'd will of consequence cease; and we shall be determined to *forbear* the Pursuit of that, which at first appeared to be Good, but is found in the whole to be rather the contrary; and be content to *endure* that which appear'd to be Evil, but in the main is quite the reverse.

Forbearance and *Endurance* are the two first and principal Lessons, to be learn'd in the School of Wisdom; and whoever studies *Life*, and aims to improve it to the best Advantage, will frequently deny himself lesser Enjoyments, when they come in Competition with such as are more excellent and worthy.

If we can but once learn the Art of *Self-denial*, and be so far at our own Command, as to be free and disengaged from inferior *Pursuits*; we shall find but little Difficulty in directing

directing our aim to the highest and the best. And therefore we should make it our constant Care, to correct those *false Ideas* of Pleasure and Pain, which are apt to lead us astray; and to withdraw the *Fancy* and *Opinion* of *Good* or *Evil* from that to which justly, and by necessity it is not joined; that so we may with the stronger Resolution and better Success apply it to that, with which it naturally agrees.

'Tis of the last Importance that we should form right Opinions, and *adequate Ideas* of Good and Evil, upon which our *Affections*, and consequent *Actions* do so much depend; and this in a great measure is in our Power, if we will but heartily set about it: It requires no long *Deductions*, nor *intricate Conclusions*: Every Man's own Sense and Experience will readily inform him in most Cases if he will but freely make use of his *Reason*, and not contract his Views, and blindly submit to be govern'd by other *Masters*.

ALL that is required is only a little Care and Attention, and an *habitual Caution*, which the Mistakes we too often commit

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through Inadvertency, should excite in us. The Consciousness of this should induce us to restrain all impetuous Motions, and controul every forward Inclination, till the *Ideas* of *Pleasure*, and *Apprehensions* of *Evil*, which offer themselves to our View, are thoroughly examined and corrected.

THIS *Discipline* and *Castigation* of our Fancies and Opinions, will prevent a great deal of Folly and Extravagance in our Conduct, it will not only direct our *Affections* to their proper Objects, but also reduce them to a just Proportion with the real *Good* or *Evil* that is before us: It will make us less eager in the Pursuit of transient Pleasure, and check all immoderate *Transports* from Expectation or Enjoyment, which must quickly have an End, and will as certainly be followed by Uneasiness and Pain. And lastly it will make us less afraid of enduring a little Pain and Sorrow, which will be but of short Continuance, and will surely be succeeded by *Joy* and *Pleasure*.

THIS Method will render our Desires and Aversions, our Hopes and Fears more moderate and calm; and though it may possibly diminish

diminish the *Velocity* of our Motion, it will very much contribute to the *Beauty* and *Regularity* of it; for if we can but once settle within ourselves just Opinions of Good and Evil; we shall not be apt to deviate, and vary in our *Conduct*, but our Pursuits will be uniform and constant, and as to all our Affections and Inclinations, we may be likely to continue the *same Persons* to Day as Yesterday, and To-morrow as to Day.

S E C T. V.

BUT though we should be able to form just Opinions of Good and Evil, and understand their true Value and Importance, and the natural tendency they have to our *Happiness* or *Misery*; whenever we take them into due Consideration: Yet it may sometimes happen that our Affections will be irregular, by reason of some Objects being brought near, and frequently presented to our View, while others are kept at a Distance, and almost excluded from our Thoughts.

WE too often find, that though in our sedate and cooler Hours, when the *Temptation* is removed to a just Distance, we can plainly discover the *Fallacy* of those deluding Appearances, which do frequently prevail so as to betray us into *wrong Pursuits*; and can sufficiently blame and condemn ourselves for it; yet when the nearer approach of the bewitching Object displays it before the Mind in all its alluring Charms, it excites such a *lively Idea* of Pleasure, and so fully employs our Thoughts, that we soon begin to lose our Sight of every other Good: We are then no longer at our own Command, nor can *Reason* stop the powerful Impulse, and fairly consider the Consequence, but we are hurried away by an irresistible Force, into Measures directly opposite to what our best Judgment and most *deliberate Choice* did approve.

THIS *continual Presence* of some certain Ideas in the Mind, will not only excite irregular Desires, and move us to pursue inferior Satisfaction to the neglect of such as are more valuable and worthy; but it also very much increases the Uneasiness of Desire,
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and raises it into *Impatience* and *Anxiety*; rendering us incapable of enjoying any other Good, till that we have in view be obtained; though yet at the same Time by putting us upon too hasty Measures, it frequently occasions *Disappointment*.

IN this Case the only Remedy is to prevent the *Idea* from fixing itself so much in our Thoughts, by keeping the *Object* at a Distance, and out of our View, that no fresh Impression be made upon our Senses; by which means, though we suffer under the want of it for a while, yet by degrees its *Influence* will diminish; and *Reason* will have Time to remove the *false Idea* of Pleasure; or if that cannot presently be effected, we may call to our Aid the Idea of some other greater and more valuable Good, which being by *Reason* and *Consideration* brought home to the Mind, and view'd attentively, may raise an *opposite Desire*, of Force sufficient to destroy the former.

ALSO when the Idea or Apprehension of any future Evil is almost constantly *present* in the Mind, it must raise an *Aversion* or *Fear*, which will be violent and increasing, depriving

ing us of all prudent Forecast, and rendering us incapable of using the most proper Means to escape it, if it be an Evil which might be avoided; or if it be what we must necessarily undergo, it creates *lasting Torment* and Disturbance, much more grievous than the *Suffering itself*, which when it comes would be but of *short Duration*.

AND not only the Fear of *future Evil*, but the Remembrance of any past Misfortune, or *loss of Good*, which cannot be retrieved if the Idea be always kept in the Mind, will produce perpetual Grief and Sorrow, and give a *tedious Existence* to Disasters, which would otherwise be but *short and transitory*. Therefore the best Method in both Cases will be to keep the Idea, as much as possible, out of our Thoughts; and divert the melancholy Imagination, by introducing something more pleasing and agreeable, till by length of Time, and the Assistance of *Reason*, the Impression may wear off, and we may at last be reconciled to that which was once the Cause of our *Aversion* and *Disturbance*.

BUT when we can neither by the Force of *Reason* conquer and subdue these *false Ideas* of
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of Good and Evil; nor make our escape from 'em by calling in others to our rescue, we are then *captivated* and *enslaved*; and our Condition is the more unhappy, when we can at some certain Seasons clearly discern our own *Misery* and *Subjection*, but not with Strength and Resolution sufficient to *redeem* ourselves, and regain our Freedom.

THE *Active Powers* we are furnished with, are those of *Thought* and *Self-motion*; and when we can exercise the faculty of Thinking, can bring any Idea to our View, or lay it aside, and call up another to be considered in its Turn, when we can examine all Things calmly and impartially, in order to form a right Judgment of Good and Evil; and in Consequence of this, can begin and forbear, continue or end any Motions of our Bodies, as we shall chuse and prefer, we are then properly *free Agents*.

BUT as we are in a State of *Servitude*, when our outward Actions are not at our own Direction, so we are no less *enslaved* when our Thoughts are not at our own Command; but some Ideas will *force* themselves into our Minds, and not give place to others, nor suffer

fer us to extend our Views beyond themselves, but by their false and deceitful Appearances raise *Desires* and *Aversions*, which must be instantly obeyed, and too *imperious* to admit of any *Check* or *Controul*.

WE are no longer *Free*, nor Masters of ourselves, when we cannot put a stop to our Motions, look round about us and thoroughly consider the Consequence, before we yield to the Force of any *impetuous Inclination*. We then must bid adieu to all true *Happiness*, as well as *Liberty*, when we cannot think at large, with a most free and impartial use of Understanding; but the whole *Attention* of our Minds is by a kind of Fascination or Enchantment, diverted from every thing else, and fixt upon some particular Objects from which it is not in our Power to remove it.

'Tis no wonder that in such a *Situation of Mind*, the chief Enjoyments of Life come frequently to be overlooked, whilst inferior Satisfactions are most earnestly pursued: For whatever shortens our Views, and takes off from the *Largeness*, and *Freedom of Thought*, so far contributes to bring us into Subjection,
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and *Misery*: Every Error and Enormity of Life proceeds from short Thinking, and from a partial and narrow View of Good and Evil, of which we can then only form a true Judgment, when we can *think freely*, and without *Restraint*.

WE know that in many Cases it is in our Power to withdraw our Attention from any of our Ideas, and to bring others into our View and Contemplation; to compare them with one another, and by *Reason* and *Consideration* to correct those *false Appearances*, which would lead us into Errors, and Enslave us to undue and irregular *Desires* or *Fears*. Whenever we neglect to do this we blame and reproach ourselves for it, in our cooler Hours, being conscious that if we were not wanting in our Endeavours, we might more frequently attain to it: The Task may seem difficult at first, but Practice, Application and Custom, would render it more easy.

YET such is the Imperfection of the *human Understanding*, that we must upon many Occasions unavoidably make *wrong Judgments*, sometimes through invincible Ignorance,

rance, and often through Inadvertency. The narrow Capacity of our Minds will not allow us to see many Things at once, or at least we cannot view them from the true *Point of Sight*, so as to discern the just Proportions of Good and Evil; but some will be set too near, and some too far, and consequently appear greater or less than they ought.

AND then however equally fram'd, or near a like, the Race of Mankind may be, there is always some small difference in their *inward Faculties*, as well as in their outward Features; so that all are not affected exactly in the same Manner, by the same Objects. Education, Fashion and Custom, may cause a still greater Difference, and all together do produce that vast diversity of Opinions, Relishes and Measures of Life, and that great variety of *interfering Motions*, in almost infinite *Directions*; all of them deviating more or less from the Truth and Perfection of Moral Excellence.

ALL these *Errors* and *Deflections*, when view'd single, do appear irregular and deformed, in which Light they will, and always ought to be seen by us; yet in the whole

whole they make an agreeable Mixture, and may possibly contribute more to the Beauty of human Affairs, than an uniform Regularity of *Motion* could do.

THE sole Design of this *Discourse* is to make it appear, that there is undoubtedly a certain *Rule*, according to which we should regulate our *Conduct*, and form our Sentiments of Life and Manners; and though none can attain to Perfection, yet the nearer we can approach the Standard of *Moral Truth* or *Virtue*, the more we shall advance our own true *Happiness*, in the Enjoyment of the greatest and most *lasting Pleasure*.



PART II.

S E C T. I.

IN order to discover the various Pleasures and Pains, Desires and Aversions, we are subject to; to determine their true Value and Importance to our *Happiness* and *Misery*; and to distinguish such Enjoyments as are irrational, mean and of short Duration, from those that are rational, valuable and lasting; it will be necessary to enquire into the several *Senses* or *Powers* of *Perception* we are endowed with.

THE Ideas we receive by our *external Senses* do variously affect us with Pleasure and Pain, according as the Objects of those Ideas tend to the Preservation of our Bodies, or are destructive to them; thus too great a degree of Heat or Cold, too intense a Light, or whatsoever by cutting, bruising or tearing
any

any part of our Bodies, would disorder our *Organs*, and render them unfit for performing their Functions, gives us *Pain*, and thereby warns and obliges us to withdraw and avoid it, while Eating, Drinking, and other natural Actions, are attended with *Pleasure*; and the *Desires* and *Aversions*, excited thereby, are, in a just Degree, requisite and good, being absolutely necessary to the Preservation of every Individual, as well as to the Propagation of the Kind: Yet the Pleasures of this sort are always esteemed the *lowest*, as being only what we enjoy in common with *Brutes*.

BESIDES the Pleasures and Pains we receive by simple Ideas through our *external Senses*, we are also disposed to receive Pleasure and Delight, from the View and Contemplation of our complex Ideas: That Quality in Objects which affects the Mind with this Pleasure, is called *Beauty*; and results from Uniformity, Order and Proportion of Things; and their Reasonableness and Fitness to answer the designed End; and that Power of the Mind to perceive this Pleasure, and to be delighted with whatever is harmonious,
 beauti-

beautiful and comely, is commonly called a *Fancy* or *Imagination*; but may more properly be term'd an *internal Sense*, or a *Sense of Beauty*.

THE Order of the *Universe*, the Planetary System, all the Works of Nature, from the greatest to the least, when accurately view'd, and well understood, do strike the Mind with *Pleasure*; as do also regular Figures, Mathematical Demonstrations, and general Theorems, and all the Works of Art, as Architecture, Statuary, Painting and Musick. The Charms of *Beauty* are widely display'd, we find it almost in every Thing that we view, and it is easy to observe how different Minds are captivated with different *Beauties*, and engag'd in various Pursuits.

As every Thing which is beautiful and just, excites in our Minds a pleasing *Admiration* and *Delight*; so whatever is foolish and absurd, whimsical and deform'd affects us with a different kind of Pleasure, and raises our *Mirth* and *Laughter*: This Power of Affection is peculiar to Mankind, and may be call'd a *Sense of Ridicule*, for it cannot be disputed, but that we are necessarily determined by
Nature,

Nature, to be thus affected upon the View and Representation of whatever is *ridiculous*, and that Mirth and Gaiety, Humour and Raillery, do make up a great part of the *Pleasures of Life*.

MAN being form'd a sociable Creature, his *Affections* are not confin'd within himself, but as he is in some sort united with those of his own Kind, a great part of his Happiness depends upon that of others, and by a kind of *Sympathy*, he naturally rejoices at their Welfare, and the Sight of their Misery gives him Pain ; which raises strong Desires to promote the one, and to avert or remove the other.

THIS *Sympathetic Sense*, or Feeling, is visible in all Animals, that are form'd for Fellowship in any Degree, and has been thought so natural to Mankind, that it has been always called by the name of *Humanity* ; and is the Foundation of all those social Affections of Kindness, Benevolence, Compassion, Gratitude, Parental and Filial Affection, Friendship, Love to ones Country, &c. which are as necessary to maintain Societies, and uphold Communities, as the private and selfish Affections

Affections are to preserve and support every individual Person.

As that is termed *Good* or *Evil*, with respect to a particular Person which tends to promote his own private Happiness or Misery, so those Dispositions and Actions of rational Agents are called *morally Good* or *Ill*, which are judg'd to be beneficial or hurtful to others, or to the whole *Species* or *Kind*.

AND from hence he is called *morally Good* or *Virtuous*, who has this Social and Sympathetic Sense, strong and powerful, and all Affections arising from thence directed by *right Reason*, and every way suited to the *Publick Good*; as on the contrary he is termed *morally bad* or *vitious* in whom this Social Disposition is weak and deficient, or else through wrong Judgment is so partial and misguided, as not to be conducing to the *general Good*.

AND we are not only moved directly by this *Sympathy*, to promote the Happiness of those of our own Kind; but whenever those *Social Affections*, Sentiments and Actions, come to be represented to the Mind, and view'd in Reflection, they excite a pleasing Approbation,

bation, Love, and Esteem of the Actor, and exhibit a *Beauty* and *Decorum*, superior to any thing else whatever, as they are discerned to be conducing to the Order and Harmony of *Society*, and the *Happiness* of Mankind in General; and much more does the *Consciousness* of having done such Actions ourselves, affect us with a most exquisite Pleasure, while those Actions which betray a want of such kind Affection, and especially which proceed from contrary *Dispositions*, as Malice, Ill-nature and Ingratitude, are extremely displeasing, odious and deform'd, raise Aversions, Hatred and Indignation against the Actor; and the *Consciousness* of having done such Actions ourselves, gives us Grief and Disturbance, and is always attended with bitter *Repentance* and *Remorse*.

THAT Power of the Mind to distinguish Actions, Dispositions and Characters, and to be thus differently affected by them, is call'd a *Moral Sense*, or a *Sense of Right and Wrong*, which contains the sympathetic Sense before mentioned, and something more, as it is peculiar to Creatures endowed with *Reason* and

G *Reflection*;

Reflection; and who are capable of forming a Notion of a *publick Interest*, who are not only disposed from Benevolence and Humanity, to do good Actions, but can make those very Dispositions, Sentiments and Inclinations, and the consequent Actions and Behaviour of *rational Creatures*, the Objects of their *Affection*; and are necessarily determined to be pleased with such as do apparently tend to the publick Good, and to disapprove and dislike the contrary.

THESE *reflex Passions*, are of all others the most lively and transporting; and 'tis here that the Harmonious, the Beautiful and Comely, as well as the Dissonant, the Odious and Deform'd, by striking upon this *Sense*, do affect us more strongly than in *Musical Numbers*, or any outward Forms or Representations of sensible Things; raising our highest *Admiration* and *Esteem*; and also exciting our keenest *Aversion* and *Scorn*: And when we reflect upon our own Conduct, the continual Joy which results from the *Consciousness* of having *done well*, is a lasting Reward to *Virtue*; but whoever varies from this *moral Rectitude*, will be always Self-condemned;

ned; and that Horror and Remorse which accompanies the Reflection upon wicked Actions, will destroy all *inward Peace* and Satisfaction.

THIS *Sense of Right and Wrong*, as it regards our own Inclinations and Actions, is commonly known by the name of *Conscience*; and the Approbation of a Man's own Mind, and Consciousness of his own Virtue and Merit in the best Sense of the Word, is call'd *Honour*; a Possession which is justly valued above any thing else in the World.

THERE is also another *Sense* nearly ally'd to this, which ought to be govern'd by it, and that is the *Sense of Reputation and Honour*, in the common Acceptation of the Word, whereby we are determin'd to delight in the *Love, Esteem* and *good Opinion* of others; even when we expect no farther Advantage from them; and to be extreamly disturbed and uneasy when we are *despised* and *ill thought of*, though we dread no further Evil.

S E C T. II.

SUCH is the Frame and Constitution of *human Nature*, that all the Race of Mankind are endowed with these *Senses*, or *Powers of Affection*, though perhaps in various Proportions and different Degrees.

THERE is no human Creature that is not visibly defective in his Make and Temper, but besides the Pleasures and Pains he receives from his *outward Senses*, will very early discover an *internal Sense of Beauty*, by being pleased with what is regular, orderly and uniform, and when he comes to be try'd by proper Objects, will shew evident Symptoms of the *sympathetic Affections*, such as Kindness, Compassion, Benevolence and Love. And though it may be somewhat later before he comes to Reason and Judgment; yet as soon as he is capable of *Reflecting*, he will be pleased and delighted with every Shew and Representation of the Social Passion; think nothing more amiable than this; nor any thing more odious than the contrary; and thereby clearly disclose a *Sense of Right and Wrong*. The

The Sense of Honour and Shame shews itself much sooner, and it seems most reasonable and fitting, that before we arrive to Moral Judgment of our own, our Actions and Behaviour should be govern'd by the Sense and Opinion of *Others*.

THOUGH all these *Senses* or Dispositions seem to be implanted in the *human Nature*; yet they do not shew themselves equally in all Persons, and at all Times; nor are they in their Nature fixed and invariable; but may by several Causes be increased and diminished, depraved and altered, and are frequently *concealed*, so as to seem almost totally extinguished and *destroyed*.

THE *Affections* arising from different Senses do frequently act contrary one to another; in which cases the stronger will, for a Time, suppress the weaker: Thus *Resentment* of Injury is contrary to Kindness and Compassion, and will frequently overcome, not only the *Affection* which we naturally bear to others, but even *Self-love*, or the Regard we have to our own Safety. The sensual Appetites, and what we call *Self-interest*, do often act in Opposition to *social Affection*, so far

far as, for the present, to over-rule and subdue it: And yet notwithstanding this, these *Dispositions* may still remain in the Mind and Temper, and will not fail to shew themselves, when those more *prevailing Passions* are remov'd. But by wrong Instruction, Education and Example, joined with long *Practice* and *Custom*, some of these Powers may be very much impaired and almost entirely lost and effaced; while others are strengthened and encreased beyond their due Proportion.

As we shall always pursue that most which we take to be our greatest Good, so we are apt to judge that to be our greatest Good, which affects us with the greatest *Pleasure*: But even in this we may be liable to *Error* and *Mistake*, and we find many, who actually place their highest Satisfaction in mean and contemptible *Enjoyments*; while the more valuable and worthy are neglected and despised.

Wrong Judgments, and false Opinions of Good and Evil do first betray us into *wrong Actions*; and these being repeated, bring on *Habits*. For the longer we indulge ourselves

selves in any wrong Practice, the more will the Opinion of the false Good be augmented and confirmed; and the *Idea of Pleasure* more firmly associated and combined with Objects, to which it does not naturally belong; and those Objects being so often presented to our View, we shall be drawn in, to hanker after, and passionately to *long for* such Satisfaction, as contain in them but little real and natural Joy, or perhaps none at all but what consists in Relief from the Uneasiness of the proceeding *Desire*: And thus by degrees, we may come to place our chief Delight in *unnatural* and fantastical Pleasures, as well as to dread and apprehend imaginary *Evils*.

THE Powers and Faculties of the Mind, as well as the Organs of the Body, gain Strength by *Action* and *Exercise*, as by the want of it they grow weak and feeble; and *Custom*, which is a second *Nature*, will by degrees increase our *Relish* or Disposition to be pleased with any Enjoyments, that are frequently desired and often repeated, while the Sense of other *Pleasures*, with which these are inconsistent, shall, through
Disuse,

Diffuse, be very much weakened and *impaired*.

THERE are also other Causes which will, for a Time, produce an Alteration in our *Temper*, and dispose us to be pleased or disturbed with what at another Time will have no such *Effect*, or at least not in the same degree; so that if there is not an *Auditor* or *Inspector* to take an account of what passes, and watch all the minute Variations of *Humour* within, as well as to correct all false Appearances from without, our *Judgments* will not only be imposed upon, but by degrees our very *Senses*, Dispositions and Inclinations, will be quite altered and chang'd.

WHILE our *Senses* are in their natural State, we may by a right use of *Reason*, in a great Measure, guard against wrong Judgments, and *false Appearances* of Good and Evil, which would betray us into *Errors*; but when these have so far prevailed, that by long Practice, the very Temper and Disposition is changed, to rectify this will be a Task of much greater Difficulty.

HAPPY it is for those who are not only born with just and orderly Dispositions, but
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in whom they are cultivated and improved by early *Discipline*, and a *virtuous Education*. Where this has been wanting, there will be required a greater force of *Reason* and *Consideration*, with all the assistance of good *Example* and *Instruction*; to correct those *Prepossessions*, *Prejudices*, and *ill Habits* which have been contracted; and to reduce into order those *Powers of Affection*, which may be grown out of *Proportion*, by being excessive or deficient, either from the natural *Temper*, or the *Power of evil Custom*.

THIS is not impossible to be effected, by those who will sincerely and heartily endeavour it, in the method of *Suspence* and *Deliberation* before-mentioned: For though *Reason* cannot give us any new *Powers of Affection*, yet upon a fair Enquiry it will discover to us, which are the most natural, as well as the noblest and most lasting *Pleasures*; due *Consideration* will raise *Desire*, and frequent *Practice* encrease the *Relish* of them; as on the contrary, by a strict course of *Self-denial*, all opposite *Affections* may be moderated, and we may, by degrees, wean ourselves from such *Enjoyments*, as are inconsistent with

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those wherein we ought to place our greatest *Happiness*. For as every Passion gains Strength, and encreases by *habitual Practice* and *Indulgence*; so it may be reduced, and brought under by the contrary Method of *Forbearance* and *Restraint*.

By this Means therefore it is in our Power to work upon our own Minds, so as to rectify our Temper and Disposition; and to form within ourselves a just *Relish*, a true and invariable *Taste* of Life and Manners; and thereby redeem ourselves from a state of *Misery* and *Slavery*, to the glorious and happy Condition of *Liberty* and *Virtue*.

THE Method may perhaps at first seem too mortifying and severe; but whatever we may suffer for a short Time from *Self-denial* and *Forbearance*, and suspending the Gratification of our Desires, till our *Ideas* and *Opinions* are examined and adjusted; all this will be amply recompenced afterwards, by a pleasing Reflection on the *Conquest* we have made; and upon every Step which we take in this great Work, the glad Mind feels its own *Recovery*, and congratulates itself on its own *Advancement* and *Prosperity*.

ON the other hand, a fond indulgent *Regimen*, and the easy *Philosophy* of following every foremost Inclination, and taking every thing to be our Good, which pleases us, naturally leads to the most abject and *dissolute* state of Life; and will soon bring us into the greatest *Anxiety* and *Distress*. And therefore we should make it our main Business and Concern, to rectify all our *Opinions* and direct all our *Desires* to the highest and most exalted Happiness our Nature will admit of; and to keep always in our Eye the Beauty and Perfection of *human Life*, which consists in a *commanding Reason*, and a just *Harmony* and Proportion of the *Affections*, by a due Subordination of such as are low and mean, and yield but a short and transient *Satisfaction* to those that are of a higher and more exalted Nature, and which afford a more lively and durable *Pleasure*:

S E C T. III.

The *Pleasures of Sense*, in the common Acceptation of the Word, are universally acknowledged to be inferior to those of the

Mind; yet the *Appetites* and *Aversions* of this kind are feldom found to be weak and deficient, but rather too prevalent and eager; being excited, not only by *Ideas* in the *Mind*, but also by painful and uneasy *Sensations* in the *Body*, the more effectually to quicken us to such *Actions*, as tend to our own *Preservation*; and though these private and selfish *Affections* are very necessary in a moderate degree; yet as too great an *Aversion* to the Pains, as well as too great an *Indulgence* to the Pleasures of *Sense* is manifestly inconsistent with our true *Felicity*, 'tis here that we are most industriously to put in practice the Lessons of *Indurance* and *Forbearance*.

THUS an excessive *Love* of *Ease*, an *Aversion* to *Labour* and *Hardship*, an immoderate *Fear* of *Danger*, or of *Death it self*, renders a *Man* incapable of performing the common *Duties* of *Life*, or being useful to his *Friends* and *Country*; and so deprives him of the greatest and most valuable *Pleasures*, and is therefore justly reckoned a *despicable Character*, incapable of any true and real *Happiness*.

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'Tis also sufficiently known, how much an excessive *Indulgence* to the Pleasures of Sense, either of the luxurious, or the amorous kind, unfits us for the more refined and generous Enjoyments of the Mind, wherein we ought to place our highest Good; and how many Evils and Mischiefs it brings upon us; as also how short and transient those *Pleasures* are, which are often followed by endless *Vexation* and *Disquiet*. And besides all this, it has this Disadvantage, that too eager a Pursuit of the Joys of Sense defeats, in a great Measure, its own Aim and Intention, the very best Satisfaction of that kind, when too long continued, or too often repeated, growing nauseous and offensive, dull and heavy, and insupportable: So necessary is frequent Abstinence and Self-denial to the true Enjoyment of even *sensual Delight*; and so much does the Alleviation of a Pain arising from the craving of a sound and natural *Appetite*, when added to a real Pleasure, increase the Relish and enhance the Value of it.

As *Cowardice* and *Sensuality* are two Ingredients, which help to make a worthless
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and despicable Character, so there is a third, no less inconsistent with Virtue and Happiness, and that is the Passion of *Avarice* and *Self-interest*, as it is commonly call'd; for tho' a Competency of such Things as are mediately good, as *Wealth*, &c. is very necessary, as they serve to relieve us from the many Wants and Sufferings to which *human Nature* is exposed; as they enable us to do Acts of Kindness, and Compassion to others, and by this Means make us taste the generous Pleasure of relieving the Needy, and Distressed; and lastly, as they are Things without which very few Satisfactions of any kind are to be obtain'd: Yet as they are not good in themselves, but only the *Means* of procuring what is *really good*, and all the Advantage of them lies in a right Use and Application of them; it follows that to admire and pursue them for their own Sakes, without any view to their Use, is altogether ridiculous and absurd; 'tis employing all our Endeavours to obtain the *Means*, and at the same Time neglecting *the End*.

YET as preposterous as this may seem to be, 'tis the *reigning Passion* of the present Age :

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To get Riches by right Methods, or by wrong, is grown the prevailing Aim, and most fashionable Pursuit. But surely none who can reason justly, or think freely, will ever be betray'd into such a Choice, or consent to exchange their native Honesty and inward Worth for *outward Gain*.

A MAN's own Innocence and *Honour*, and the Peace and Quiet of his Mind, are far more precious than Gold; and whoever parts with these, whatever else in the World he may gain in lieu of them, will find that he has made but a *wretched Bargain*. And as too strong a Desire after Riches, even tho' no injurious Methods are made use of to acquire them, renders a Man entirely *selfish*, and by degrees extinguishes all kind and generous *Affection*, depriving him of the highest and best Enjoyments, and affording nothing in their room but the poor and low Gratifications of a *sordid* and unnatural Passion, which yet is in its nature ever insatiable; it has therefore always been justly reckoned in common Language, a *wretched and miserable Character*.

THE Pleasures of the Mind arising from the Contemplation of *natural Beauty* in every Object wherein it is display'd, are far superior to sensual Enjoyments; and as this *internal Sense* or Determination to be pleased with whatever is harmonious and proportionable, regular and uniform, was given to excite us to the pursuit of *Knowledge*, and in some Measure to reward us for it: So there can be no Entertainment more noble, nor more worthy of the human Mind, than the Study of *Nature*, or the Improvements of speculative Knowledge; especially the *Mathematical Sciences*, which proceed by general *Theorems* and regular *Demonstrations*, such as contain in them a surprizing Beauty, and always strike the Mind with a wonderful Pleasure. 'Tis the same in all the Branches of *polite Learning*, and the Works of Art, so far as they are agreeable to every Man's particular *Genius*, and to his Rank and Station in the World.

THE Rich and Great may delight in stately Buildings, fine Apartments and costly Furniture; sumptuous Tables, Equipage and Dress, all of them in the nicest Order and
Beauty,

Beauty, some are charm'd with Statuary, Painting, Musick, and Poetry; while others find more Entertainment in contemplating the *Beauties of Nature*, and even in Shells and Butterflies, can discover something extremely pleasing to their Fancy: Some admire a Horse, a Hound, or a Hawk; and others, more mindful of their own Kind, are enamour'd with the Charms of a *fine Shape* or a *beautiful Face*, so far as to think all things else despicable and mean.

THOSE of a more exalted Genius and capacious Mind, can flight all the Allurements of inferior Pleasures, and solely intent on the Pursuit of *Knowledge*, can labour Night and Day, at the Solution of a difficult *Problem*, or the Demonstration of a general *Theorem*; and think themselves well rewarded for their Pains: They are curious to search into the *Secrets of Nature*, the Virtues of Plants, and the Formation and Oeconomy of Animals, the Union of the Elements, and the Structure of the Universe; can describe the Order of the celestial Bodies, and the Courses of the Planets, the Force which retains them in their Orbits, and the *Laws of*
I *Motion*,

Motion, which they unerringly observe; this Knowledge opens a View of the wonderful Harmony and Beauty of the Creation; demonstrates the Wisdom and Goodness of the *Deity*; and at the same Time shews above any other Instance whatsoever the surprizing Force and Sagacity of the *human Mind*.

BUT this internal Sense of Beauty ought always to be under the Conduct of *right Reason*, that the Affections arising from thence may not be excessive, or out of Proportion; and much more that the Sense itself be not vitiated and deprav'd, as we find it is in many Persons, who instead of admiring what is natural, orderly and uniform, and consequently truly *beautiful*, can be pleased with nothing, but what is wonderful and astonishing, monstrous and prodigious; which lays a Foundation for the wildest *Enthusiasm* and *Superstition*.

THE Pleasures of *Mirth and Gaiety*, arising from the Sense of *Ridicule*, when kept within due Bounds, and regulated by Reason and good Manners, are of very great Use in *human Life*; to soften our Cares and
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allay the bitter Sense of Misfortune and Calamity; to temper our more serious Thoughts, and serve as an Antidote against Spleen and Melancholy. And they do also in many Cases, most effectually convey Lessons of *Wisdom* and *moral Instruction*; since whatever is indecent and deformed in Life and Manners, may by the Pleasantry of Wit, and the nice Touches of *refin'd Raillery*, be so naturally drawn, and placed in so ridiculous a Light, as not only to please and divert us with the Representation; but at the same Time to discover to us the Blemishes and Imperfections of our own *Characters*, and by a secret kind of Shame excite us to correct and amend them.

THERE can be no stronger Motive to make us reform the Follies and Absurdities of our Sentiments and Actions, than the Fear of being exposed to *Derision* and Contempt. Yet at the same Time it is no small Advantage to this Method of *Instruction*, that it may be managed with Pleasantness and good Humour, without any sour Aspects or magisterial Airs, to render it disagreeable and offensive.

BUT as too great a Disposition to *Laughter* is a Mark of Levity and Folly ; so the Art of turning all things into *Ridicule*, and especially of exposing to Laughter those we converse with, is frequently the Talent of ungenerous Tempers, and a sure Indication of Pride and *Ill-nature*. For the Passion of Laughter is always attended with a secret Scorn of the ridiculous Object, and the Pleasure is heighten'd with a sudden Reflection on our own Preheminence, and therefore will be the strongest, where *Vanity* and *Self-esteem* are the most predominant.

AND as the Pleasures of this Sense are at best but short and momentary, and when too much indulged occasion a *Remissness* and Relaxation of the Mind ; unfitting us for Enjoyments of a higher and more serious Nature ; they ought therefore to be moderated and kept within Bounds, and always be under the Restraints of *Reason* and good *Manners*.

WE ought not to endeavour to raise a Laugh from every thing, but only seek what in every thing may *justly* be laugh'd at : Whatever it is, that contains in it any thing
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weak and foolish, unhandsome, or absurd, will not fail of appearing *ridiculous*, when placed in a true Light ; but that which is handsome and just can never by all the Wit in the World be made to appear so : The very Attempt is in itself absurd, and consequently *ridiculous* ; and though sometimes the best Things may for a while be made the Sport of facetious Tongues, yet that can only be by Misrepresentation and false Colouring, and when the Cheat is discover'd, the *Ridicule* will be sure to return with double Scorn on the Authors of so vile a Deceit.

S E C T. IV.

As the Pleasures of the *Mind* are preferable to those of the *Sense*, so of all mental Pleasures the most exquisite and valuable are those of the *social* Kind ; the Exercise of universal Kindness and Benevolence, Gratitude, Friendship, Humanity and Compassion, affording a Delight more intense and lasting than any other. Whenever we are touched with any strong Affection of a social
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and friendly fort, the Eyes, the outward Features and Gestures, with other evident Marks and Tokens, do plainly express a most lively and transporting Joy, which silences and appeases every other *Motion of Pleasure*, whenever it presents itself: No Satisfaction of any other kind can be a Match for it, and whoever is a competent Judge, will always give this the Preference; as we may observe in numberless Instances, that Men will endure all manner of Hardships, defy Torments, and even Death itself when animated with a strong Desire to serve those they love, or an Aversion to do a thing which they abhor, as *morally Ill*: Nay, what is more, every Action of that kind meets with an universal Approbation and Applause, and in the *common Sense* of Mankind, is judged to be right and good, as well as handsome and becoming.

AND though, on the contrary, there are many who prefer the Joys of Sense to the Satisfactions of the Mind, and chuse private and selfish Pleasure before *social Enjoyment*; yet that must proceed from a manifest wrong Judgment, or a *false Relish* of Life, because
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we always disapprove and blame ourselves for such a Choice, whenever we seriously reflect upon our own Conduct; and every settled Disposition of that sort is condemned by all Mankind, and always treated with Detestation and Contempt.

AND these *Pleasures* are not only superior to all others, in their immediate Exercise, but they are of a permanent and durable Nature; they do not take their Flight the Moment they are enjoy'd, nor are subject to *Satiety*, or *Disgust*; much less are they follow'd with Repentance and Remorse; but the Remembrance of such Actions is always sweet, and the *Consciousness* and *Reflection* ever affords a most pleasing and delightful Entertainment.

CONTINUAL *Peace* and *Serenity of Mind* is the genuine Product of a *virtuous Life*: For a Man may then look into himself with constant Pleasure, when he finds nothing there that is odious or deform'd, to give him any inward Disturbance or Disquiet; when he is free from the Reproach of Shame and Guilt, and can value himself upon some little *Merit* with his Friends, his Country and Mankind.

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THIS most pleasing *Review* strikes the *moral Sense* in so lively a manner, as to excite a most exquisite and inexpressible Delight; insomuch that the Approbation of a Man's own Mind, and the Consciousness of his own *Virtue and Merit*, has been reckoned, of all the Blessings of Life, to be the dearest and most inestimable; the best and noblest part of Mankind having always valued it above any thing else in the World, sooner chusing to dye, than violate their *Honour*, or do one single Action that is villainous and base; as well knowing that even Life itself, when this is gone, is but a wretched Being, hardly worth the keeping.

THE Practice of *Goodness* and *Benevolence* is not only in itself the greatest Pleasure; but it is also even in this Life amply rewarded, by its *Consequences* and *Effects*: Every Pleasure we have, is doubled by being shared and communicated; and every Joy and Contentment of others, by this *kind Sympathy* becomes our own; and then the Love and Esteem, the Approbation and Praise of all *good Men*, which to an honest Mind is a most exquisite Satisfaction, will always attend

tend upon *Virtue*, which proves the surest way to Honour and Reputation, because those Actions which do manifestly tend to the general Good, will never fail of being crown'd with general Applause.

It is also no small Recommendation of these *moral Pleasures* that they do not depend upon Fortune, they can never be taken from us, nor can we be hindred in the Enjoyment of them, unless by ourselves.

WHENEVER our Desire is fix'd upon a Good that cannot be obtain'd, it must occasion constant Uneasiness and Misery while it continues: And as the *Loss of a Pleasure* does often produce a most exquisite Pain, we shall be continually expos'd to *Affliction* and *Calamity*, whenever we set our Hearts upon that which may at any Time be lost, or taken from us. And therefore our greatest Wisdom will be, to withdraw our Desires from those Goods that are precarious and uncertain, not in our Power to acquire or retain, and direct them to such as are fix'd and constant, which we can at any Time bestow upon ourselves; by which Means we may be always sure to obtain what we de-

fire, without any Apprehension of *Loss* or *Disappointment*.

WHEN we place our Happiness in *things without*, which are not in our Power, and pursue them as our greatest Good, we are necessarily expos'd to perpetual Grief and *Vexation*; and the more we indulge any such Inclination, the more our Opinion of the *false Good* increases, and the Appetite grows proportionably fonder of it, so as still to create new Degrees of Uneasiness: But if we place our chief Delight in the inward Objects of *Worth* and *Beauty*; such as Honesty, Faith, Integrity, Friendship and Honour; these can never be over-valued, nor the Pleasure too much indulg'd, but will be always repeated with encreasing Joy, without any fear of *Disappointment* or *Distress*; since even that Grief and Sorrow, which is truly of a social Nature, and flows from human Sympathy and Compassion, has a mixture of something extremely pleasing and agreeable; and the moving our Passions in this *mournful way*, sometimes yields a more delightful Entertainment, than the highest Enjoyments of the sensual Kind.

P A R T

P A R T III.

S E C T. I.

WHENEVER we see any of our own *Species*, we are pleased and delighted with the Appearance; for there is a Beauty in the *human Form*, superior to any thing else, in the whole Creation. And when no opposite Affections do interfere, we feel by *Sympathy*, the same Passions wherewith we perceive others to be touched. We cannot but rejoice to see them pleased and happy, as on the contrary it gives us Grief and Anguish to view their Misery and Pain; which moves us so far as in us lies, to promote their Welfare, and to do them all Offices of Kindness and Humanity: And this Exercise of *Benevolence* has been shewn to be the greatest and most exquisite Pleasure.

THUS the Good of others becomes a real Good to ourselves, as it gives us the highest Delight; and the Misery of our fellow Creatures is also a real Evil to ourselves: And thus the *Interest* of every Particular is bound up in the *publick Welfare*; so that whoever by working upon his own Mind, can bring his Passions and Affections to that just *Harmony* and Proportion, as is most conducing to the *general Good*, will thereby procure to himself the greatest and most durable Satisfaction; as on the contrary, where the selfish Affections exceed their due Proportion, and Men pursue a *separate Interest*, in Opposition to the general Happiness, they fondly aim at a lesser Good, which deprives them of a greater.

BUT this *Benevolence*, tho' common to all, as *Men*, even to perfect Strangers, is yet stronger to those that are near, than to such as are more distant and remote; and therefore is, and ought to be, more powerful to those of the same Nation and Community, than to Foreigners; still more to our Neighbours and Acquaintance; and to our own Family and Posterity most of all; and this without considering

sidering their *moral Qualities*, or supposing them to be in all nearly the same.

BUT as Objects which are near are apt to affect us more, and those that are distant, less, than they ought; our Benevolence may possibly exceed its due Bounds towards some, while it is deficient towards others; so that this very best and noblest Disposition may prove pernicious, if it is not directed by *right Reason*; as that instead of being partial and narrow, and limited to a few, it may be entire and universal, extended in a due proportion to all *Mankind*.

THIS general *Benevolence* will oblige us to do Good to all, so far as lies in our Power, and to do no Harm to none, if it can possibly be avoided; and therefore we ought not upon any Occasion, where absolute Necessity does not require it, to do a Prejudice to others, to gain an Advantage to ourselves, nor endeavour to promote the Happiness of *some*, by what may contribute to make *others* miserable.

NATURE has form'd us susceptible of these sympathetic Affections, to maintain Society, and promote the publick Happiness, by making

king it the Interest of every Particular, to work towards the *general Good*: And therefore we should make that the constant Rule of our *Conduct*; and so far as a most free and impartial Reason can direct us, endeavour to avoid being deceived by false Appearances; and not suffer a partial and mistaken *Benevolence* to usurp the place of that which ought to be rational and just, and consequently universal and entire.

As we ought upon all Occasions carefully to examine, whether what we take to be our *Good*, may not in consequence prove the reverse of it; so especially in that part of private Good, which consists in doing Good to others, we should proceed with all due Care and Deliberation: Here we ought to suspend even the Motions of *Benevolence*, till we have well considered, whether what we are prompted to do from a Principle of Kindness, will really be conducing to the general Good; or whether what we design as a *Benefit* to one, may not prove an *Injury* to another.

FOR whatever is acted contrary to a general Principle of *Humanity*, thro' a partial,
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tho' ever so kind and generous Affection, is in itself an Inconsistency, far from yielding any true and lasting *Satisfaction*; 'tis only a false and deceitful Good; and the Pleasure which it affords, deprives us of much greater Pleasure, and will be sure, sooner or later, to bring upon us *Sorrow* and *Remorse*.

THUS *Benevolence* requires a strict Observance of the Rules of Equity, Justice and Fidelity: Forbids all Treachery, Insincerity, and Deceit, with every thing else that is *injurious* and *unkind*; but at the same Time, gives full Scope to the Exercise of Kindness and Compassion, Bounty and Generosity towards proper Objects, where it will be no harm to others, nor too much prejudicial to ourselves.

WE have frequent Opportunities every Day of our Lives, to do Good to others, without any Detriment to ourselves; or if in the Exercise of *Kindness*, we should suffer some Loss or Inconvenience, yet that will be abundantly recompensed by the Pleasure and Satisfaction which it affords: But to do Good to others, by bringing a greater Evil upon ourselves, is what no *rational Benevolence* will

will require; neither is it consistent with the general Good, to which a just degree of *Self-love* in every Particular, and a due regard to *Self-interest* is absolutely necessary.

YET upon extraordinary Occasions if any Person is willing to suffer any Hardship, or even Death itself, to save his Friend, whom he highly values, from the same Evils which he chuses to undergo; this is no harm to the Publick, the Moment of Good or Evil to the whole, being equal in both Cases: Neither is such an Action blameable, but on the contrary is always applauded as an Evidence of the highest *Benevolence* and *Generosity*.

ALSO when a Man is free to lay down his Life, in Defence of his *Country*; tho' the Advantage accruing to particular Persons, will not equal the Evil that he suffers; yet as great Numbers are like to be Gainers by what he voluntarily throws away, 'tis no Loss to the *Publick*, but on the contrary is esteem'd highly useful and beneficial. And as no *Government* or Community can long subsist, nor be secure from being oppressed, and injured by their Neighbours, unless the
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Members thereof be resolute to hazard their Lives in its Defence, therefore a *Contempt of Death* in so good a Cause, will always appear amiable and eligible, notwithstanding all partial and selfish Estimations of Happiness: *Dulce & Decorum* will crown every Action of that kind, even tho' it should prove unsuccessful, or fail of attaining the End for which it was designed.

S E C T. II.

THOUGH from a Principle of *Humanity* we bear Good-will to Mankind, yet the *moral Sense* makes a great Distinction; for when we compare different Characters, as to their *moral Qualities*, one with another, there arises a new trial of the Heart and the Sentiments; Inclinations and Affections of others, become the Objects of our Affection. Then all those Dispositions and Actions, that are kind, generous and beneficent, and that evidently tend to the *publick Good*, do always appear *beautiful* and *amiable*; they heighten and increase general Benevolence, and naturally win our *Love and Esteem* of the Agent,

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even though we receive no Advantage from them; but if they are beneficial to us, they excite a further Affection called *Gratitude*.

WHEREAS on the contrary such Actions as proceed from *Malice* and *Ill-nature*, or which shew the Want or Absence of natural Affection, appear odious and deformed; they impair or extinguish Benevolence towards the Agent, and excite our Hatred, Scorn and Indignation, even tho' we are not prejudiced by them; but if they are hurtful to us, they raise in us, in a particular manner, the Passion of *Anger* and *Resentment*.

THAT Love and Esteem which naturally rises in our Minds towards any Person of eminent moral Goodness, is a most pleasing and delightful *Affection*, and the Practice of virtuous *Friendship*, yields the greatest and most exalted Happiness: 'Tis so far from weakening the general Benevolence, due to all Mankind, that it rather tends to improve it; and the kind and social Disposition, must of necessity gain Strength, and encrease by Exercise, in so generous and disinterested a manner.

BUT

BUT as every Affection is influenced by *Opinion*, our great Care should be to form right Opinions of Persons, and not to be impos'd upon by false Appearances, and specious Pretences: No little Services done to ourselves, nor any Agreement in Sentiments or Similitude of Manners should induce us to judge partially, or possess us with too favourable an Opinion of any Persons.

IF we are not cautious and wary in forming our Judgments, we may often conclude Men to be possessed of that *moral Excellency* which they really want; or else we may take that to be worthy and amiable, which is not *morally excellent*; from whence it must of necessity happen, that our *Love* and *Esteem* will be injuriously and wantonly apply'd; and we shall bestow that upon the Worthless and Insignificant, which is only due to the Virtuous and Good.

By Education and wrong Instruction, early inculcated, the *moral Sense* is frequently depraved, and the Idea of Excellence and Worth associated and combined with many Things, to which it doth not properly appertain: Opinions and Practices of no real

Use, nor in the least tending to the Happiness of Mankind, are look'd upon as *venerable* and *sacred* ; whereby we are drawn in, to admire and reverence some Persons for that which is not *morally Good*, and also to hate and despise others for that which is no way *Evil*. Hence it is that *Distinctions* are form'd, and *Divisions* made into Sects and Cabals ; and hence proceeds that *Spirit of Party*, and Faction of such infinite Mischief to the Publick, as well as destructive of private Happiness, wherever it obtains.

THEREFORE we ought to call in all the Powers of Reason to our Aid, to distinguish carefully what is sound and right in *human Sentiment* and *Affection*, from what is vicious and wrong, and not to suffer our natural Notions of what is amiable and worthy to be perverted or misapply'd.

IN order to assign the just Value of every thing in Life, the sole Measure and Standard must be taken from *moral Rectitude*, by which Rule we may readily distinguish betwixt the *Good* and the *Bad*. And as the former will always claim our Respect and Esteem, so the latter will naturally excite

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our Scorn and Contempt. But to form any other Distinctions amongst Men, and mark them with our Love or Hatred upon any other Foundation, is both injurious and unreasonable: Friendship so ill-grounded can yield no true and natural Satisfaction, but will be sure to give us Disturbance and Regret, whenever we discover our Mistake.

THE degree of *Love and Esteem*, due to any Character, seems to be in a great measure proportionable to the *moral Goodness* and Virtue which it contains: For Kindness and Benevolence, when conducted by Reason, are always amiable, though the *Ability* to do good be never so small; or though the Attempts towards it, should prove unsuccessful: But there are many things, which tho' not in themselves morally excellent, yet when join'd with Virtue, do render it more *illustrious* and more *beneficial*.

THE kindest Affections, if they be not directed by *Prudence*, are of little or no Value; but the brighter the Endowments of Reason and Understanding, the more useful a good Disposition will be, and will appear in a more beautiful Light. A Mind well stor'd
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with useful Knowledge, a large Compass of Thought, a quick Invention, and a penetrating Judgment, when join'd with great *Humanity* and *Good-nature*, do make up a worthy and valuable Character.

Temperance and *Courage* are in themselves excellent, as they evidence a moderate degree of private Affection, and shew the selfish Passions to be under Command; but especially when they are made use of to serve the Purposes of Benevolence, they appear exceeding amiable. *Natural Beauty* of outward Form, when united with the Beauties of the Mind, makes a Person appear more lovely and agreeable. *Wealth* and *Power* when they are employ'd for the publick Good, render a Man more extensively useful, and do therefore challenge a greater degree of *Veneration* and *Respect*.

BUT tho' all these do add a greater Lustre to *Benevolence*, yet they seem to derive their own Splendor wholly from it; because where this is wanting, *outward Beauty* loses all its Charms, and the greatest *natural Abilities* are so far from appearing amiable, that they only render a Person more odious
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and more dreadful. For though *Benevolence* without *Ability*, can do but little Good; yet the greatest *natural Abilities* without *Benevolence*, will be sure to do abundance of Harm.

AND yet from a deprav'd Sense of what is *worthy* and *estimable*, it happens that many are honour'd and ador'd, for being placed in high Stations; or being possessed of great Riches, Titles and Preferments, without any thing else to recommend them; and others again applauded and admired for their *Policy* and *Cunning*, to outwit and deceive those they have to do with; or for a superior Understanding and capacious Mind, unaccompanied with an *honest Heart*; whilst others for their *Courage* and *military Exploits*, not in Defence of their Country, but to serve their own Ambition, have been celebrated and renown'd for *Heroes*; who in reality were no better than Robbers and Destroyers, and who ought to have been branded with Infamy, as the common *Pests of Mankind*.

THE highest Improvement of Benevolence is *Gratitude*, for Nature has determin'd us most powerfully to love and esteem the
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moral good Qualities of others which affect ourselves ; and has given us the strongest Impressions of *Good-will* towards those who are kind and beneficial to us ; so that it is no small Encouragement to do Acts of Kindness and Beneficence, when the *Benefactor* is sure to gain, one Time or other, an addition to his Happiness, by a suitable return from the Persons obliged ; or if that is not in their Power, by a constant Acknowledgment, and the sincerest Expressions of *Love* and *Gratitude*, which from the meanest of Mankind is always extremely pleasing and delightful.

'Tis also of no small Moment, that as our Ability to do Good is limited to a narrow Compass, lest our Benevolence should be lost, or become useless by being equally extended to Multitudes, at a great Distance, whose Interests we could not be able to promote ; Nature has ordered that it shall be more powerfully attracted by Objects that are *near*, than by such as are *distant and remote*. Thus the general Good-will which we bear to all Mankind is heightened into Esteem for those of our Acquaintance, whose
moral

moral Qualities are known to be good, and it is still farther improved into Gratitude towards those who have obliged us with Kindnesses and Favours; and thus a Foundation is laid for the strictest Ties of Friendship amongst Relations, Neighbours and Acquaintance, by the endearing Intercourse of mutual good Offices.

AND whoever is wanting in this Disposition, or fails to shew a grateful Sense of a Benefit receiv'd, and a strong Benevolence towards his Benefactor, is looked upon as the worst of Mankind, and always treated with the utmost Detestation: The Absence of this Sense being always mark'd as the greatest Depravity of human Nature, scarce consistent with any degree of moral Virtue.

BUT still this Affection, as well as all others, is to be govern'd by Reason, and directed to its proper Objects in a just Proportion, so as not to interfere with that general Benevolence which we owe to all Mankind. For we shall not fail to blame and reproach ourselves afterwards, whenever out of Gratitude to one, we do that which is injurious to others.

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S E C T.

S E C T. III.

THE same *moral Sense*, which determines us to be pleased with some sort of Sentiments, Dispositions and Actions, does as naturally dispose us to be *displeased*, and offended with others. For as all the kind and social Affections, and whatever is *morally Good*, do make a Character appear exceeding amiable and graceful, and always gives us *Pleasure and Delight*, whenever they are presented to our View: So on the other hand, the Want or Absence of these, and much more every contrary Disposition, renders a Character *odious* and *deform'd*, and always gives us *Disturbance* in the View and Representation.

BUT here we ought to use our utmost Care, not to entertain worse Opinions of any Persons than they deserve, by supposing them to have those morally ill Qualities which they are free from. Actions are good or ill, amiable or odious, only through the Affection and Intention from whence they proceed: And as we cannot see into the Hearts of others, but must judge of their Dispositions by their Actions; we ought never

ver to be hasty in forming a disadvantageous Opinion of any Person; but rather suspend our Judgment, till we have carefully examin'd every Circumstance; and when we have done all, we should put the best Construction upon every Action, that it will admit of. For the *general Benevolence* which we bear to all as Men, should make us presume that they are not wanting in the common Affections of *Humanity*, till we have evident Proof to the contrary.

WHENEVER it appears that the *social Affections* are weak and deficient, and overpowered by the *selfish Appetites* and Inclinations, this so defaces the Beauty of a Character that we can no longer view it with Pleasure and *Approbation*; and if it was possible for this *Sympathy*, or Love to those of our own Kind, to be wholly wanting in the Constitution of any human Creature, so as that he should be entirely govern'd by Selfishness or *Malice*, 'tis hard to conceive how such a one could be treated, otherwise than with the utmost Hatred and Detestation. But there are many Actions which may appear to be morally ill, which yet do pro-

ceed from Kindness and good Affection; but that so partial and *misguided*, that it looks not like itself: And this merits our Compassion rather than our Hatred, and should excite our Endeavours to rectify the *Mistake*. And in all Persons the good Dispositions may be sometimes overcome by sudden *Starts* and contrary *Sallies of Passion*, which yet may be excused if the main Tenour of their Conduct be right and good. We ought therefore never to suffer any little Injuries done to ourselves, or any false Suggestions, or unfair Representations, to fix our Attention so much upon the Faults of any Persons, as wholly to overlook their Virtues, and induce us to entertain odious Conceptions of them, as if they were *absolutely evil* and *malicious*.

THERE is a Mixture of Good and Ill in all *Characters*, the most excellent *Endowments* are often attended with great Blemishes and Imperfections; and if we search for the most *shining Qualities*, we shall often find them obscured by remarkable *Defects*. But still where the moral Goodness is sufficient to outweigh the Evil in any Persons, they ought so far to be the Objects of our *Love* and

and *Esteem*; and the worst ought not to share a greater degree of *Hatred*, than is proportionable to the excess of their ill Qualities above the good.

Too great a propensity to entertain odious Opinions of others, and to hate and despise them upon slight Grounds, must proceed from a great want of Benevolence and Humanity; and from a false Judgment of ourselves and others: For whoever understands the Frame and Constitution of his own *Species*, and considers well the great variety and strength of their *Passions*, and the weakness of their *Reason*, will make great allowances for *human Frailty*; and if he can but look into himself with an impartial Eye, he may see enough there, to make him less forward to censure and condemn other Men.

As we ought not to wrong any Persons so far as to suppose they have in them that moral Evil, which they are clear of; so neither ought we to hate and despise them, for that which is not morally ill: Poverty, Meanness of Birth, natural Defects, Blemishes and Imperfections, should move our *Compassion*, rather than our *Scorn*; and we ought never
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to hate one another for different Opinions concerning Religious Matters, or different Methods of Religious Worship.

OPINIONS and Practices, which are hurtful to none, nor any way inconsistent with the *publick Peace*; tho' they may possibly be sometimes foolish and absurd, and consequently the proper Objects of *Mirth* and *Ridicule*; yet they ought by no means to be treated with *Rage* and *Fury*: Tho' as the Passions of Mankind have been managed, the keenest Resentment has been raised about Trifles, and a Difference in Opinion about Matters of no real use, has been made the Foundation of an *Antipathy*, the most bitter and implacable of all others.

BUT whatever is so far destructive of natural Affection and *Humanity*, as to give us injurious Opinions of others, and create in us Aversion and Ill-will towards them, without just Cause, or beyond a just Degree, from whatever Notion or Principle it may be advanced, it is utterly repugnant to our true Felicity: It destroys that Peace and Tranquillity of Mind, that Ease and *Good-humour*, so essential to our Happiness; is productive of
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nothing but continual *Rancour* and Disturbance, and in its Consequences and Effects, will be sure to bring upon us Sorrow and Repentance.

WHEN the moral Qualities of any Persons appear to be wholly Evil, and their Actions extremely hurtful to others, they raise in us not only Hatred and Aversion, but also *Indignation*; not only suspending for a Time, that Kindness and Good-will, which we naturally bear to all, but moving us forcibly the contrary Way, and inciting us to their Harm and Destruction, as Creatures that are pernicious to the rest of their Kind. But this Passion of *Anger* and *Resentment* is most frequently and most powerfully kindled by Injuries done to ourselves; because we are apt to be most deeply affected with that moral Evil in others, by which we ourselves come to be Sufferers; and this in a just degree is very requisite, as it fortifies us to repel Injury, and resist Violence when offer'd.

IF any Creature was wholly void of this Passion, and could be so *tame*, as patiently to bear all Indignities; such a one must not expect to be ever free from *Insults* and *Abuses*.

busēs. But it is no small Efficacy to restrain Men from ill Actions, when they know that they shall incur, not only the Hatred and Ill-will of all Mankind, but also the *Vengeance* of the injured Parties; and one Person intending Violence and Harm to another, is often deter'd from the Execution, when he perceives by the *rising Motions* of this Passion, that it will not pass unpunished.

BUT as every Affection of Kindness and Gratitude is a real *Pleasure*, so every Impression of Hatred and Resentment is a *Displeasure*; 'tis a real Pain and Disturbance, and all the Satisfaction we can receive in gratifying our *Revenge*, is only a short-liv'd Joy, that results from the removal of a most grievous and tormenting Anguish, which is most commonly follow'd by long and lasting *Remorse*. We ought therefore for our own Sakes, and for our own Ease and Happiness, to avoid it as much as possible; and especially to guard against the Excess of this Passion, so destructive of *Humanity*, and of every kind and social Affection.

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It ruffles and discomposes the Mind, destroys the natural Calm and Easiness of our Tempers, and hinders the Exercise of Benevolence towards others, as well as those who gave the Provocation; introducing by degrees a Habit of Perverseness and *Ill-nature*, which may at last degenerate into Cruelty, Barbarity and Inhumanity; the most horrid and unnatural of all Passions, and attended with the greatest Misery, as they imply a state of continual *Bitterness* and *Torment*, without the least mixture of any real and *natural Joy*: Accompanied with a Consciousness of the deserved Hatred and Ill-will, the Hostility and Vengeance of all Mankind.

THIS Passion, whenever it prevails, is of all others the most raging and impetuous; it bears down Reason and every opposite Affection, like a *Tempest*; hurrying Men into Actions contrary to all Honour and Justice, as well as to their own Interest and Safety: We ought therefore to stifle and suppress as much as possible the first Motions of *Resentment*, and give ourselves liberty to examine, whether what we take to be an *Injury* may

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not be an accidental Harm, without any malicious Intention. For nothing is the proper Object of Anger but what proceeds from a Disposition that is morally Evil, and many Actions which do so, and are real *Injuries*, had yet better be despised and overlooked, or turned off with an air of Pleasantry, than seriously and stiffly resented.

WEAK and feeble Minds are most prone to *Anger*, and by their exceeding *Fierceness*, generally disappoint their own Purposes; but the greatest and the bravest of Men are always calm and sedate; they are above being disturbed with little *Injuries*, and can generously pardon the greatest; taking more delight in *Mercy* and *Forgiveness*, than in prosecuting *Revènge* when it is in their Power.

S E C T. IV.

ALL good and virtuous Actions meet with the Approbation of our own Minds, whenever we reflect upon them; and the *Consciousness* thereof yields a continual Pleasure, and next to that, we are so form'd by Nature, as to delight

light in the Approbation and *good Opinion* of others; which is the Sense of *Honour* and *Reputation*.

If this be directed by right Reason, so as to regard only the Judgment of the Wise and Good, it will prove a most powerful incentive to *Virtue*; but if it is an undistinguish'd desire to gain the good Opinion of those we converse with, it may frequently lead us astray: For in many Persons the *moral Sense* is very much depraved, and they are taught to measure right and wrong, not by the Standard of *moral Excellence*, but from false and partial Rules, contriv'd for other Purposes than to promote the Happiness of Mankind; and thereby are accustomed to admire and esteem many things that are not *morally Good*, and to hate and abhor others that are no way *Evil*: And whoever is so fond of popular Applause as to make the vulgar Opinion the Rule of his Conduct, cannot frequently fail of being led into Errors; nor can any one attain to Virtue and Happiness, or to true and lasting *Honour*, unless he can form his Judgment according to the Standard of *Truth* and *Nature*, and can

recal his Fancy from the Power of *Fashion* and *Reputation*, to that of *Reason*.

THEREFORE we ought to moderate this natural Love of Reputation, so far as never to aim at it by indirect Methods, or strive to obtain it by such Actions as will destroy the Approbation of our own Minds, and that *Peace of Conscience* which of all worldly Possessions is the most invaluable: All the Honour and Reputation we can gain by such Means, is only a false and deceitful Good, which deprives us of one much greater; and as it is built upon a wrong Foundation, can never be sound and lasting, but will rather end in *Infamy* and *Disgrace*.

THE Love and Esteem of others, when obtain'd by honourable and worthy Actions, yields a Pleasure not only natural and just, but exquisite and delightful; and the best and noblest Minds are most susceptible of this Passion, which yet ought to be restrain'd and kept within due Bounds. It will always be a great part of Wisdom to form *just Opinions* of ourselves, and to guard against *Flattery* and *false Praise* from without, and against *Self-love* from within; that we be
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not betray'd into vain and conceited Imaginations of our own Worth, so as to expect a greater share of *Honour* and *Esteem* than we really deserve.

WHOEVER sincerely aims at Virtue, will be modest and humble, contenting himself with the Testimony of his own Conscience, and the Esteem and Approbation of those few good Men, to whom he has the Happiness to be intimately known, without being solicitous for the rest; since an immoderate desire after Honour and Applause, which exceeds the bounds of an honest *Emulation*, and rises into *Pride* and *Ambition*, is so vain and foolish a Thing.

Who would ever engage in such a Pursuit, who considers with what difficulty a general Reputation is to be obtain'd; how often 'tis sully'd by Misrepresentation, and how easily 'tis blasted by Calumny, Slander and Detraction?

THE most distinguish'd Excellence is commonly the mark of *Envy* and *Ill-nature*; for it is the fault of all proud and ambitious Spirits, that they judge too partially of their own Merit, and raising their Expectations

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too high, are apt to think themselves injured when any Persons are advanced above them, and obtain more *Honour* than themselves : And this moves them to hate others for those very Qualities which ought to excite their Admiration and Esteem, and to use all base and unworthy Methods to lessen and defame them. But a Wound given to a Man's Reputation and good Name, is of all others the most sensible, and excites the bitterest *Resentment* ; which fills the Hearts of aspiring and ambitious Men with constant Anxiety, Jealousy and Mistrust ; and the cruel shocks of Disappointment, the workings of Envy, and the stings of Affront will be perpetually tormenting those, whose Desires after *Honour* and *Applause* are so eager and excessive.

WHEREAS they who act from a virtuous Inclination, without any such ardent *Thirst after Fame*, and can rather slight and despise the Opinion of the *Vulgar*, will not fail sooner or later to obtain the largest share of it ; and if their Station in the World has been such as to enable them to be beneficial to a considerable part of Mankind, their Names will be made immortal, and they will be for ever remembred with *Honour* and *Esteem*.

S E C T.

S E C T. V.

THE sum of what has been advanced is only this, that Nature has furnished us with various *Senses*, or Powers of Perception, thro' which the proper Objects do differently affect us with *Pleasure* or *Pain*; and that we are necessarily determin'd to shun and escape, so far as we are able, every painful and uneasy Sensation; as well as to retain and continue that which is pleasing and delightful.

ALL *present Good* affects us with Pleasure, which never puts us into Motion, nor gives us any Inclination but to continue in our present State; but present or approaching Evil gives us Pain and Disturbance, and by exciting our *Aversion*, moves us powerfully to fly from and avoid it; and not only present Evil, but also every Idea of *absent Good* gives us Grief and Uneasiness; and by exciting our *Desire*, moves us strongly to seek after and obtain it.

WHENEVER we pursue that which upon the whole is not our *Good*, as also when we fly from that which is not necessarily and absolutely

absolutely *Evil*; these must be manifest Errors in our Conduct, as they are not conducting to our *Happiness*, which is the ultimate end of all our Actions.

YET we are unavoidably subject to such *Errors*, because we are put into Motion by *Desire* or *Aversion*, which tho' they are excited by the Objects of Good and Evil, yet they are not proportionable to their true and intrinsic Value, but to their Appearance, or the Impression they make upon the Mind, and the Fancy or Opinion we have of them: And it may frequently happen from many Causes, that the *apparent* Good or Evil may be different from the *real*.

To prevent being led astray by false *Ideas* and deceitful Appearances of Good and Evil, God Almighty has endow'd us with *Reason*, to be our Guide and Director; which will not only shew us the most proper Means to obtain what we desire, but will also, upon a fair Enquiry, discover to us which are the most worthy Objects of *Desire*; and therefore we should not suffer ourselves to be hurry'd away by every forward Inclination, but rather stop and suspend our Motions,

tions, till we have well considered whether what we have in view be really conducing to our *Happiness*, or the contrary.

WE ought to apply our utmost Care, to search the Source and Original of all our Errors, and correct those false Opinions, and deluding Fancies, which betray us into irregular Pursuits. Every Idea of Pleasure, or Apprehension of Evil, which presents itself to our view, should be brought to the Standard of *Truth* and *Reason*, and be thoroughly examin'd, rectify'd and adjusted before it is allow'd to pass; that so our *Desires* and *Aversions*, and all our consequent *Motions*, may be ordered and directed for the best; that we may, as far as in us lies, shun and avoid all Evil, and obtain the best and greatest Good.

IN order to discover which is our greatest Good, and will yield us the most valuable and lasting Pleasure, we have endeavour'd to enquire into the several *Senses*, or *Powers of Affection* we are endow'd with; and the various Pleasures and Pains we are capable of receiving; from whence it appears that the *Pleasure of Sense*, commonly so call'd,

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wherein many Persons do place their chief Enjoyment, are of all others the lowest and least valuable, and when too much indulged, will be sure to deprive us of much nobler Pleasures, and do commonly bring upon us the greatest Evils.

THE *Pleasure of the Mind* which results from the View and Contemplation of *Beauty*, in the pursuit of natural Knowledge, and every Branch of polite Learning, is far superior to the Joys of Sense; and is in itself very excellent and worthy, as it tends to the enlarging of the Understanding, and the Improvement of *Reason*, besides other Advantages.

THE *Pleasures of Mirth and Gaiety*, in proper Seasons, and under just Restraints, are also very useful and enlivening; they help to preserve good Humour, and Cheerfulness of Temper, and serve as a specific Remedy against serious Extravagance, and melancholy Delusion.

BUT of all the *Delights* which *human Nature* is capable of enjoying, the most lively and transporting are those which flow from *Sympathy* and *social Passion*; which
consist

consist in the Exercise of Kindness and Humanity, Gratitude and Love. For the sovereign Ruler of the World has made those Affections the most exquisitely moving and most conducing to the private Happiness of every Particular, which at the same Time tend most to promote the *general Good*.

AND they are not only the most pleasing in their direct and immediate Exercise, but also in Contemplation and *Reflection*: For every *Mind*, or thinking Principle is so form'd by Nature, as to perceive a *Beauty* and a *Grace*, in every thing that is harmonious and proportionable: But the proportionate and regular State is the truly prosperous and natural one in every Subject contriv'd by Wisdom and Design for the greatest *Utility* and Advantage, and of all Beauties, the most engaging is that which appears in *real Life*, and results from that Harmony and Proportion of the Sentiments and Affections in the *human Mind*, which is best adapted to the Happiness of every Particular, and also to the general Good of the whole System.

'Tis this which yields the highest Delight, whenever we view it in others; and much

more when we are *conscious* of it in ourselves: Whereas the contrary is most odious and detestable, exciting our highest *Aversion* and *Disturbance*; and whatever is acted contrary to this natural rule of Honesty and Worth, destroys all inward Peace and Tranquillity; and sets us at continual Variance with ourselves, because that which pleases in the Action will displease in *Reflection*, and create perpetual Repentance and Self-disapprobation.

WHICH leads to the *main Conclusion* we have endeavoured to establish; for we do presume to affirm, how contrary soever it may be to the Opinion of the World, that *Virtue* is something more than an *empty Sound*; that it is not only the Support and Ornament of Society, and beneficial to Mankind in general; but also to every particular Person, 'tis the truest and most substantial *Happiness*, as it yields the greatest and most lasting Pleasure, both in its immediate Exercise, and in its Consequences and Effects; and that 'tis this which gives a Relish to all other Pleasures, and where 'tis wholly wanting, there can be no true nor lasting Pleasure, but all will
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be Bitterness, Horror and Remorse, without the least Mixture of any thing gentle and agreeable.

THEREFORE as *Happiness* is the ultimate end of our Lives, we ought to make use of that natural Talent of *Reason*, which God Almighty has given us, to guide and direct us toward it; and by the Method of Suspence and Deliberation upon all Occasions, to form right Opinions of *Good* and *Evil*, so far as we are able, and establish within ourselves a *just Relish*, a true and invincible *Taste* in Life and Manners.

HAVING first settled right Notions of what is worthy and valuable in Life, we ought by the patient use of *Forbearance* and Restraint, to wean our Fancy from inferior Enjoyments; and by *habitual Practice*, to encrease our Relish of those that are our highest Good; and by working upon our own Minds, to bring all our Dispositions and Affections to that just Harmony and Proportion, so essential to *Virtue* and *Happiness*, which are found to be one and the same.

WE ought to have the *sensual Appetites* and Inclinations, as much as possible, at

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Command; avoiding too much *Indulgence*, and rather striving on all Occasions to practise Forbearance and *Self-denial*; which will not only much inance those very sensual Delights, but also leaves us free and disincumbred in the pursuit of better Objects.

AND then as to the *Goods* of *Fortune*, as those are only necessary to some certain Ends, and not immediately good themselves, our *Desires* of these, and *Pursuits* after them, should be kept within due Bounds, and never suffered to grow immoderate. The whole Value of these we should esteem the proper use of them, and never to imagine they are good for any thing further than to supply our own Wants, and relieve the Necessities of others. In a word, we should strive above all, to enrich our Minds with the inestimable Treasures of true *Knowledge*, and whatever we have, endeavour to cultivate such a *virtuous Disposition*, that it may always be our *chief* Delight to do Good to all, so far as lies in our Power. All our other Pleasures should be brought to correspond and be Friends with this; and no Affection
should

should be indulged by us, that is in the least inconsistent with it; and that for this plain Reason, because the nearer we approach the Standard of *moral Excellence*, which consists in *Goodness* and *Benevolence*, the more we shall advance our own true Happiness in the Enjoyment of the greatest and most *lasting Satisfaction*.

AND yet after all, with our utmost Efforts we shall not be able to attain to be perfectly virtuous, or completely happy, but *Virtue* and *Vice*, *Wisdom* and *Folly*, *Happiness* and *Misery*, will be differently shared and variously mixed and compounded in the several Characters of Mankind: And so it must of necessity be, unless we could be omniscient and infallible. The *supream Wisdom* best knows how to compose the Disorders to the intelligent World, to reconcile the jarring Motions, and make all the seeming Discords contribute to a most perfect *Harmony*. But that is above the reach of our Understanding: We can distinguish what is *apparently* Good or Evil, with relation to ourselves, and to those of our own kind, and have the natural Sense of Right and Wrong

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to direct us in our Conduct ; but of what is *absolutely* Good or Evil, with respect to the whole, we can form no Judgment, because we cannot see the whole ; and we are lost in Mazes, whenever we presume to reason about things that are placed beyond our *View*, and of which we can form no *Ideas* but what are very inadequate and imperfect.

BUT as we know that in the *Universe* all things are govern'd and regulated for the best by a *Being* infinitely Wise and Good ; we have Reason to believe that not only those Motions, that are regular and true, but also those, which appear to be most irregular, all the various *Errors* and *Imperfections* of the several *Parts* may be guided by a superior Hand, so as to conspire to the Beauty, Order and Perfection of the *whole*.

THUS, *Sir*, I have laid before you without any reserve what you required from me, and what I take to be the *Truth*, in hopes that I may possibly set you on thinking with a little more Attention upon a Subject of no small Concern. I pretend to no more in this small Performance than only to have copy'd from *Nature* and from the *greatest Masters* ; and
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whether I have copy'd truly, is submitted to your Judgment. For tho' I call this Piece which I present you with, a *Sermon* (as I know not how such a profound Harangue can merit any other Title,) yet I would not have you to imagine that my Design is to instruct you. You will not suppose me to be so vain. I only lay it before you for your *Advice* and *Correction*; and as these are the Rules by which I have endeavoured to form my own Judgment in *Morals*, I should think myself happy, if in the main they might meet with your Approbation, and I depend upon your Friendship to point out the Mistakes I may have run into.

I HAVE long been possess'd with an Opinion, that the *Passions* and *Affections* of Mankind and all their consequent *Motions* and *Actions* do depend upon some certain *Powers* of the Mind, which tho' they are very plain to Observation, yet if they are not sufficiently attended to, the *Appearances* of human Affairs can never be rightly explain'd. I have therefore laid the foundation of this little *System of Morality* entirely upon what we feel and experience within ourselves, without presuming to enter into Speculations of a

high and difficult Nature, or to intermeddle with what is your peculiar Province, I mean, *Divinity*.

WHAT we ought to do as Men, for the sake of our own present Happiness and Interest is every Man's Business to enquire: What we are further oblig'd to as *Christians*, with regard to the World to come, we gladly learn from you, always acknowledging that the Perfection of *Virtue* is in *Religion*, without which it would want its main Security and Support.

BUT it seems highly necessary, that we should in the first place settle right Notions of what is morally excellent, and cultivate suitable Dispositions within ourselves; otherwise we shall scarce be able to form worthy Conceptions of the *divine Being*, and may possibly do him but little Honour, while we ascribe those weak Passions to *Divinity*, which are the Frailties and Blemishes of the human Nature.

THERE are some antecedent Demonstrations of Reason previous to *Revelation*, which must convince us, that there is a *God*, and that he is so good as not to deceive us, nay, that the highest Goodness must

must of necessity belong to him, without any of those defects of Passion, those Weaknesses and Disturbances, which are only to be found in finite and imperfect Beings, but are necessarily excluded a Being which is *absolutely perfect*.

But if thro' the want of a free use of Reason we absurdly suppose the *Deity* to be an arbitrary, angry and vindictive *Being*, revenging himself when offended on others than those who gave the Provocation, or like some Eastern Monarch pleased with Flattery, Cringing and mean Prostration; partial to a few of his Creatures, and cruel to all the rest; this can have no other Tendency than to sap the Foundation of all true Religion, and to reverse all *Morality*, by making those Qualities amiable and adorable which are really odious and detestable.

AND if a Man is never so sound and steady a *Believer*, yet if he has no Disposition that is morally Good, if he has no Sympathy, nor kind Affection, nor no Sense of *Virtue* and *Honour*, but his whole Attention is fixt upon the fullness of his Reward; how can you judge him to be other than *mercenary* and *venal*, who by the same Allurements of

private Advantage may be hired to be wicked, as well as to be Good, both being to him equally indifferent.

WHOEVER has a Disposition so kind and compassionate, as to delight in the *Happiness* of his fellow Creatures, will desire it as a thing, which is to him directly and immediately *Good*, and if he is from Reason and Reflection persuaded that the Pleasure he receives in promoting the Happiness of others is superior to all other Pleasures, the greater will be the Appearance of *Good*, and the *Desire* will be so much the stronger; he will then strive to cultivate such a Disposition as his truest Interest and Happiness. If he is also convinced from *Revelation*, that moral Goodness will be rewarded in the World to come, this will raise an *additional Desire*, and move him more powerfully to pursue it, not only as excellent in itself, but as it will be a means to procure eternal Happiness hereafter.

AND in many Cases where the *good Affections* are weak and insufficient to carry us on steadily in a virtuous Course, or where they are in danger to be overcome by opposite Passions, the belief of future Rewards and

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Punishments will come in most seasonably to our Aid and Support; so that the enforcing of these is highly necessary, because, when rightly apply'd, they do most effectually promote moral *Goodness* and *Virtue*.

YET if we are mainly influenced by these external Motives, our Attention will be gradually drawn off from the intrinsic Beauty and Excellence of *Virtue*; and if at the same Time the Practice of it is represented as no way conducing to our Happiness in this Life, but rather tending in many Cases to make us miserable, we shall no longer chuse it for its own sake, but only as a thing that is mediately Good, which may procure us some Advantage hereafter.

THEN if these future Rewards and Punishments are not annexed in a just proportion to their proper Objects, and much more if they should chance to be *misapply'd*, and Rewards be join'd to moral Evil, and Punishments to what is morally Good; the Desires and Aversions, the Hopes and Fears excited thereby will act contrary to the good Affections, the Cause of Virtue will be betray'd, and Mens *Morals* may be exceedingly corrupted and depriv'd.

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'Tis an Observation no less true than it is seriously affecting, that at this very Day, in the greatest part of *Europe*, where the reform'd Religion has not obtain'd, Rewards and Punishments are almost entirely *misap-
ply'd*. For tho' it is most certain, that the *divine Being* wills nothing, but what is most conducing to the Happiness of his Creatures, and will reward such Actions as tend to the *general Good*, and punish the contrary; yet in those Countries, by suppressing or perverting the Scriptures, the Clergy seldom fail to make their own Will the Will of God, and can distribute his *Rewards* and denounce his *Judgments* as best will suit their own Purposes.

'Tis well known, that the main stress is not laid upon *moral Goodness*, but upon such things as are either trifling and insignificant, of no manner of use in Society, or else immoral and pernicious, utterly inconsistent with the Happiness of Mankind. For there the People are train'd up, so far as the strongest Sanctions of future Happiness or Damnation can influence to resign their *Reason* and *Understanding* in the first place, and believe, or at least pretend to believe
things

things that are either wholly unintelligible, or else entirely senseless and absurd ; and in the next place to divest themselves of *Humanity*, and most heartily to hate, persecute and destroy all who are not of the *same Opinion*.

It is indeed happy for Mankind that the natural Affections of *Benevolence* and *Compassion* are in many Cases too strong to be overcome by those *foreign Motives*; inso-much that even under the worst Religions, the generality do still retain a great share of moral Goodness: Yet it were to be wished, that History was more silent as to many cruel and inhuman Actions, which Men have been excited to thro' false and injurious Conceptions of the Deity, and from a wrong Application of *Rewards* and *Punishments*. For the time has been, when People have been taught to merit *Heaven* by committing the greatest Barbarities upon Earth; not to mention the lesser and more moderate Mischiefs of mutual Hatred, and bitter Antipathy, which different Persuasions seldom fail to bear towards one another.

WE know by certain Experience, that something of this kind is still remaining among

mong those, who call themselves *Christians*, tho' too little agreeing with that great Rule and Characteristick, which our blessed Saviour himself has left us: *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples in that ye have Love to one another.*

BUT I shall dwell no longer upon so ungrateful a Subject; tho' these Abuses and Corruptions of the best *Institution* that ever appeared in the World are what I have often heard you lament: For you, my Friend, have too much of a Christian Spirit to build *Religion* upon the Ruins of *Humanity*: You know how to represent it in its original Beauty and Simplicity, and can both by your Preaching and Example most effectually recommend all true *Piety* and *Goodness*, and particularly those truly Christian Virtues of Humility, Meekness, universal Charity and Good-will to Mankind, which makes you so much honoured and esteem'd by all that know you, and amongst the rest, By

S I R,

Your sincere Friend,

and most humble Servant.

F I N I S.